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DUNKIRK AND AFTER

PRIDE and relief at the deliverance of the B.E.F., Mr. Churchill's extraordinary speech and the close approach of danger to ourselves have raised the nation's spirit and prepared us for anything. German generals do not waste time; the last rearguard action had barely finished at Dunkirk when the new Nazi offensive began along the whole French front. The stubborn resistance of the isolated British and French forces in Belgium has at least given General Weygand a few days to throw up defensive lines to protect Havre and Paris from the enemy. The French, fighting for life on their native soil, are not this time to be surprised by tanks and dive-bombing; they will fight with more than the traditional gallantry of their race. They confront heavy odds in machinery and equipment and they may yet have to face an attack in their rear if the Germans attack through Switzerland and if the Duce's threats are translated into action. The gigantic loss of material in Belgium makes it difficult quickly to re-equip and send back to France the divisions of the B.E.F. which, saved from Flanders, are now a veteran body tried in the fires of hell. What can be done will be done. Part of the B.E.F. is already serving on the Somme frontier and the R.A.F. is giving its full co-operation. On the outcome of this battle during the next fortnight the future depends. If Germany can now be held the tide of war may change, and the floodwaters that have flowed over Northern France may begin to ebb. If France is overwhelmed we may be left alone, as Mr. Churchill says, to fight on every beach and hill and plain of this beleaguered island.

Mr. Churchill's speech combined, with incomparable skill, a frank avowal of defeat with a courage that was infectious and a realism that was reassuring. There was, as he was entitled to claim, an element of victory within this colossal defeat. British and French troops now know that the Germans sweeping down like Martians in tanks and aeroplanes can be withstood. Inside each tank and each aeroplane there is a German boy who, separated from his machine, is as timid and helpless as any other mortal. The *élan* of the conquering Nazis is formidable, but it may well prove brittle if it meets with a check. The German casualties have been large and the war has been carried on to German soil by air bombardment of German communications, oil supplies and factories. The Germans are publicly appealing for more volunteer pilots and the wounded are sent to districts far from their homes. In hand-to-hand fighting the British and French are almost certainly superior to these Nazi youths who have never known what it was to fight on equal terms. German pilots, specially trained to co-operate with tanks as part of a vast mechanised advance, are not a match individually for the R.A.F. This brings us to one of the main lessons of the war in France and Belgium. The soldiers returning to England all bitterly complain that the R.A.F. co-operates inadequately with the army, and that often they have been left defenceless against the most ruthless bombing. Mr. Churchill made special reference to this point. He urged, correctly enough, that the men who lined the beaches at Dunkirk, who took refuge in those familiar sand dunes or waded up to their necks in the sea, presented the German bombers with the most vulnerable of targets; yet the R.A.F. was in fact able to protect them and to collaborate effectively with the Navy in safeguarding the vast majority of the thousands of transports of all descriptions which filled the Channel like a regatta. In fact of course soldiers often do not see the planes that are defending them since the most appropriate method of defence may be a curtain of bombs or an aerial battle miles away from them. The soldiers may only see the bombers that get through. But this is not a complete answer. The sweep of the German scythe through Belgium and Northern France was rendered possible by a perfection of staff work in which the integration of the Air Force, the mechanised army and the pioneers is the most striking feature. The R.A.F., on the other hand, has been trained as a separate force. It performs legendary feats of daring and endurance. It has no equal in these Homeric battles in the air. But it has not been trained for that detailed and precise collaboration with the army which has been the peculiar strength of the German attack. Britain and France need first and foremost more aeroplanes and more tanks; they have also to improvise in the heat of battle a new type of unified staff work.

The End of M. Daladier

Twenty-four hours after the Germans had launched their second offensive, M. Reynaud announced the reconstitution of the French Cabinet. The new Government is notable for the concentration of

policy in the hands of the Premier, the return of M. Delbos as Minister of Education and the inclusion of non-party specialists as departmental chiefs. Instead of a committee carefully balanced in accord with party strength, the new Cabinet is the staff of a civilian general. That is what is needed to-day. The disappearance of M. Daladier from the Foreign Office marks the final end of a pitiable epoch of French history. For eight years this stocky representative of "la province" has dominated French politics. After his ignominious behaviour in the February riots, it was commonly thought that his political career was closed: but he rose to office once again on the wave of the Popular Front, and, surviving the collapse of that gallant venture, led France into the humiliations of appeasement and the vindictive counter-attack on the working-class movements. For a long time Minister of War, he has a more personal responsibility for the initial military failure than any single British statesman. In the present crisis his retention of office was intolerable to public opinion. Seeking to avert the horrors of invasion from the peasants for whom he stood, he relied first on Danegeld and then on a passive defence, perilously near to "defeatism." By so doing he made the invasion yet more horrible. There is little doubt that his going will influence political developments in Britain. Mr. Chamberlain, Lord Caldecote, Lord Simon and Sir Kingsley Wood, to name only a few, are tarred with the same brush. They took the credit for "Peace with Honour," encouraged the complacent lethargy of the first eight months of the war and stigmatised their critics as jitterbugs. M. Reynaud has given Mr. Churchill a clear lead.

Air Raids and Retaliation

The second wave of the German onslaught has dwarfed the significance of the air-raid on Paris. But naturally demands for retaliation are being made both in France and Britain. We hope that in this case the military authorities will not permit their plans to be deflected by public clamour. The only purpose of retaliation is to indicate that barbarism has not broken our spirit; its only justification would be to prevent a repetition of the performance. We do not believe either that a German or an Allied victory will be achieved by terrorisation of civilian populations. With our present inferiority in the air, it would be madness to divert our bombers from military purposes merely to accomplish a useless act of vengeance. The battle will be won and lost by the armies; and raids on Germany are, as is so far the case, only justifiable if they destroy vital sources of supply or communications and so bring immediate relief to the troops at the front. Even if they would have long-term effects upon Germany's war-production and morale, they must be dispensed with if they weaken our air-effort with the French Army. Long-term benefits will be worth precisely nothing if we lose the battle this summer. For several reasons we hope that the temptation to retaliate will be overcome and that in the difficult task of deciding how to allocate the services of the R.A.F., the French need should be regarded as paramount, even at some risk to home defence.

Cabinet Reorganisation

The changes in Cabinet organisation announced this week, should make for greater efficiency on the home front. Their importance lies fully as much in what is scrapped as in what is brought into being. There will be a wholesale scrapping of small inter-departmental committees of officials dealing with particular matters, and a substitution of central co-ordinating machinery directly under the Cabinet. Mr. Attlee, as chairman of the Food Policy Committee, holds a long-run key position; but Mr. Greenwood, at the head of the Economic Policy Committee and the Production Council, has the job which matters most in the short run, and is most closely connected with the two departments most vital in the present emergency—Supply and Labour. These are the important Committees. It is not clear what functions are supposed to be carried out by the superior committee, under Mr. Chamberlain as chairman, which we are told is to direct the work of these other bodies. If it is really to be a Finance Committee rather than a co-ordinating authority in any fuller sense, we can understand the position better, and the appointment of Mr. Chamberlain as chairman becomes more intelligible. If, on the other hand, there is any danger of this Committee really controlling those presided over by Mr. Attlee and Mr. Greenwood, we should regard it with suspicion as a potential organ of obstruction. Surely the Food and Economic Committees of the Cabinet ought to be directly responsible to the Cabinet itself, and not to any intermediate body.

Old Age Pensions

The promise that the new scales of supplementary pensions should not fall below the level of maintenance provided by progressive boroughs has been kept. Despite the application of a means test, the aged poor will now receive something better than the bare relief from distress offered by many cities and counties through their Public Assistance committees; and it is reckoned that as much as sixty per cent. of the outdoor relief in London will now be transformed into supplementary pensions, paid not out of the rates but from the National Exchequer. Only in a few towns like Glasgow will pensioners receive no benefits from the new scales. The means test will be on the lines of that laid down for unemployment assistance, though in certain ways it is less severe. Single old-age pensioners living alone and without other resources will receive 19*s.* 6*d.* a week and in addition rent and winter fuel allowances which will be fixed in relation to local conditions by the Assistance Board Advisory Committees. A pensioner couple living alone will receive 32*s.* a week *plus* similar allowances. The new scales are based on proposals of the Assistance Board prepared before the change of Government, but one or two minor instances of "scaling-up" show that the Labour Ministers did something to improve a measure whose basic principle was so opposed to their philosophy. As a temporary alleviation of wartime hardship it is to be commended.

Agricultural Wages

In contrast to the supplementary pensions, the new minimum of 48*s.* for agricultural wages marks a real social advance. It is well-known that the previous Government had approved a minimum of 42*s*—it had indeed been recommended by the National Board. But the new Cabinet rightly recognised that if the Emergency Powers were to be used to compel agricultural workers to remain on the land and to bring back those who had gone into industry, whenever they fell out of employment, then a minimum wage-rate must be fixed somewhere near that prevailing for non-agricultural labour in country areas. The new minimum is 10*s.* and 12*s.* above that at present in operation in many counties. But its importance is not only due to the financial benefit it brings to a distressed class. It destroys the inferior status of the agricultural labourer and recognises his work as of equal importance with that of industry and commerce. The rest of the community will have to bear the cost of this measure in increased prices to be paid to farmers. That is a burden well worth shouldering, since it makes possible for the first time a constructive agricultural policy.

Wages and Prices

The announcement that bread prices are to be stabilised over the next few months is satisfactory as far as it goes; but it suggests that a considerable rise is likely in the prices of other goods which are not made subject to stringent control. The comparative immobility of prices, except for a limited range of goods, in the last few months has been due partly to Government subsidies and partly to seasonal influences; and the great increase in the rate of Government spending which must now be taking place seems bound to involve shortage of both home-produced and imported supplies for civilian consumption and an increased issue of money for purchasing the smaller supplies of goods. In other words, we are now reaching the point at which the bringing into use of our reserve resources of man-power and equipment will combine with shortage of materials to create a situation of a mildly inflationary character. In the circumstances, a substantial rise in prices is almost certainly unavoidable. The need is to keep the total advance as small as possible, to maintain stable prices for an iron ration of necessaries, and to extend rationing whenever it is needed.

Woman Power

We hope that the new Government will not neglect the urgent task of reorganising women's national service. There are two separate problems. On the one hand, there are hundreds of thousands of

fit men between the ages of 20 and 35 engaged in reserved occupations whose work could be done sufficiently well by women after a brief training period. On the other hand, most of the women's organisations need drastic overhauling if they are to provide an adequate channel for the mobilisation, outside civil employment, of woman-power. The para-military bodies—A.T.S., W.A.A.F. and so forth—which have secured official recognition are performing useful service, but within a narrowly limited scope: their numbers are relatively small, and enlistment is restricted by two serious handicaps—the absurd "spit and polish" parade—ground discipline, and the fact that recruits have to undertake an obligation to serve "for the duration," wherever they are sent. This obligation is an almost insuperable bar to countless women who are ready to give up leisure or non-essential jobs and take the King's shilling, but who have home ties and therefore cannot do more than work a normal day in their own locality; yet their services in transport, messing and a host of auxiliary services—to say nothing of Home Defence work—are badly needed. What can such women do? The right solution is to retain the A.T.S., etc., as a Women's Field Army, for general service at home or abroad, but to recruit as well, on a paid, contractual wholetime basis, a Reserve Corps of women for auxiliary service within areas near their homes. Members would be asked to accept the substance, without the quite inappropriate formalities, of army discipline, and to engage for, say, six months at a time. Thousands of professional women of real capacity would gladly apply for enrolment in such a corps. Meanwhile the Mechanised Transport Corps for Women, which is already doing useful work, could take over the training of many more drivers, and the Women's Legion, once it received adequate Government support, could produce a large organisation of mobile canteens.

The Great Neutrals

The U.S.A., paralysed by the presidential manoeuvrings of its politicians, is still a long way from any active support of the Allies and at the moment has immediate troubles to cope with in Latin America. Too much significance should not be attached to the ardent pro-Ally pronouncements which receive a good deal of publicity in our press. They are the work for the most part of men and women who have always upheld our cause, but until recently have not dared to say so with all the emphasis which they would have desired. Nevertheless it is significant that Mr. Luce, who reaches 18,000,000 readers through *Life*, *Fortune* and *Time*, should now be making his papers organs of pro-Ally sentiment. Newspapermen follow public opinion and this conversion indicates that the American people is ahead of its politicians in its desire to assist the Allies in any way short of war. The Republicans are still isolationist, but they have recently been sniffing a change of wind: even the Hearst press is beginning to trim its sails. Instead of pooh-poohing "the phoney war" and discrediting the western democracies, they are now urging the desirability of assistance but the need of caution. Mr. Roosevelt, in view of his improved chances of a Third Term, must also be cautious. While the U.S.A. is still in a pre-Munich mood, the U.S.S.R. is beginning to realise the results of appeasement. The Russian press is notably dispassionate in its assessment of the campaigns and the Third International is once again stressing the strength of the Communist Opposition inside Germany. In these conditions Sir Stafford Cripps, now accepted by the Kremlin in his status of special ambassador, has a chance to achieve a real rapprochement. Stalin knows that the objectives Hitler outlined in *Mein Kampf* remain principles of Nazi policy: he might well consider it worth while to mass troops on his western frontier and thus relieve pressure on the Allies.

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GO TO IT!

MR. CHURCHILL in his magnificent oration showed to the nation the temper in which the present crisis must be faced. But more than courage and infinitely more than a specious national unity are needed if we are to overcome it. In a few weeks we have got to organise an emergency war economy and an emergency defence organisation whose whole structure is completely at variance with the philosophy and the practice of government and of administration for the last twenty years, and the place where this revolution must begin is in the Ministry of Supply.

Herbert Morrison is already at work. Wisely selecting many of his chief advisers from outside the Ministry, he has managed to achieve a remarkable acceleration of our output. This acceleration, however, will not be lasting unless he can reconstruct the Ministry whose job it is to plan production. He has at his disposal a number of punctilious, conscientious gentlemen who in various government departments gave admirable service to the country in the complacent days of peace. They are the heirs to the tradition of a Civil Service created when *laissez-faire* was an unchallenged dogma and when it was the duty of government not to manage production and distribution of goods, but to ensure that the management of them by private enterprise was in no way disturbed. The qualities of a good Civil Servant were therefore in the first place an overwhelming respect for civil service procedure as in itself more valuable than any end which might be achieved by it; secondly, complete personal integrity, and, thirdly, a determination wherever possible to avoid decision by delay. In this happy world memoranda pursued their leisurely course up the solemn hierarchy from the junior principal to the Permanent Secretary, garnished at each stage by the neat comment of each official. No procedure could be better for seeing that the wrong man was not hanged or that a mistaken figure did not reach the Minister in office. Polite battles were fought between departmental imperialists anxious to extend the influence of their section or ministry. Such a machinery was once defensible under peace-time conditions in purely administrative departments: it is ineffective when it is used to manage great industries, to reorganise them and to speed up their production. You cannot nationalise industry by imposing upon its management a Civil Service superstructure and if you seek the half-way house of public control for industry by inserting government officials at every point to inspect and to report, and departmental committees to co-ordinate activity, the result is inevitably a series of bottle-necks and a stifling of enterprise. Men who know something of business management have always been perfectly right in condemning the idea that an efficient state Socialism could be built on traditional Civil Service procedure. The Socialist is equally right in asserting that a national economy cannot be planned by leaving things to private enterprise. Above all in war it must be run with the vigour, personal responsibility and courage displayed in some business managements under private enterprise: but the enterprise must be public.

In war we cannot afford to retain the committee system or the committee outlook. On the home front as well as in the army, the general with his staff is necessary. On this point Mr. Morrison must be completely ruthless if he is to do his job. Red tape costs lives; Civil Servants who try to produce aeroplanes with the same procedure by which they managed the routine of the Ministry of Procrastination for the last 30 years are more dangerous than a parachutist *posse*; they must be removed.

Instances of the delays caused by routineers can be multiplied indefinitely. Started only a few years ago a plant at X developed into one of the most efficient British munition factories. Before the demand came for increased production the factory had a monthly output of Y heavy gun barrels. At midnight on May 31st, when the factory superintendent sent in his monthly report, he was able to state that an increase of 250 per cent. had been achieved. Vans were waiting at the factory gates to rush the guns away but the army inspector refused to cut through red tape in order to get them off. Early on May 31st he had informed the foreman that three barrels had slight defects. The foreman suggested they should be replaced and that the original breaches and mountings which had been inspected and passed, should be retained. The army inspector refused. Procedure demanded that if the barrel were defective the whole gun had to be rejected.

At another plant hundreds of lorries roll off the assembly line every day. In view of the total loss of all army lorries in Northern France motor transport is desperately needed. But the army inspector has been accustomed to insist that every lorry must be subjected to a 25-

mile test run before delivery. Before the war began this firm had produced tens of thousands of lorries for civilian purposes, and, as is the practice in the trade, had subjected every twenty-fifth lorry to exhaustive tests. Eighteen months ago one entrenched firm was given War Office approval to get on with the development of a certain engine. All other firms were discouraged. The firm estimated that it would take them 15 months to develop the engine. Three months after their time limit had expired they finally managed to set up an engine which abjectly failed in its tests. At a dinner shortly afterwards a War Office official bewailed the fact that British factories were unable to produce the type of engine in question. The chief engineer of one motor firm, which was not so well entrenched with the authorities, offered to produce one in 30 days. In 30 days the engine was ready; in two months four engines had been installed for test runs and last week the foundations were being built for a new factory, but 18 precious months had been wasted.

Or consider the case of a certain railway works. In the last war they had been converted to war production; to-day nothing but routine rolling stock is being produced. The Ministry of Supply was apparently satisfied by a tranquil manager's report that the works are in full production and therefore should not be disturbed. The men are not so satisfied; in the last fortnight when their friends and relations were dying at the front they were working on new luxury saloon carriages. They want war work: but officialdom has not given it to them. They have been scheduled as a reserve occupation, but they are employed only to increase the comfort of railway passengers at this terrific moment of national crisis.

All over the country the workers are willing to make any sacrifices provided there is work for them to do and they are sure that employers and profits are also conscripted. Herbert Morrison has said "Go To It!" He has done wonders already, but he must now harden his heart to a purge of Civil Service routineers and Civil Service procedure. The efficiency of business executives and managements must not be strangled; it must be transferred from private to public service.

THE TRAGEDY OF BELGIUM

[FROM A BELGIAN CORRESPONDENT]

DURING the last war there ran the story that when the German armies invaded Belgium in August, 1914, Emperor William II sent this curt message to King Albert I: "Vergiss nicht, dass Du ein Deutscher bist!"—Don't forget that you are a German! The Kaiser was referring to the Saxe-Coburg origin of the Belgian rulers and possibly also to the circumstance that King Albert's wife, the present Queen Dowager Elisabeth, was a true-born Bavarian princess.

How the Belgian "roi-chevalier" and his Queen responded to this rather primitive racial appeal, is now a matter of common historical knowledge. But can it be that "the call of the blood," issuing forth from the fanaticised depths of Nazi Germany, should have evoked a more powerful echo in the breasts of young King Leopold and of his ageing mother Elisabeth?

Some people have been wondering whether the purely personal act of King Leopold in ordering the Belgian army under his command to capitulate in circumstances which exposed to the gravest peril the British and French armies he had himself called to his aid, was not the result of deliberate and calculated treachery. That is an interpretation of events which can undoubtedly be dismissed as far too extravagant, especially as it would be difficult to discover any rational motive for such an incredible betrayal not only of the Allies but of his own country and people. But looking back dispassionately on the history not only of the last nine months but of the past four or five years, one cannot help recognising that both in his foreign and home policy, King Leopold has been acting throughout as though he had been a pliant tool in the hands of Hitler and Mussolini.

The story begins with the part played by Belgium in the destruction of collective security which Hitler soon recognised as the first aim to be achieved if ever his plans for defying Europe were to materialise. The Governments of the great Western democracies must, of course, be primarily held responsible for the breakdown of the League, the tragic consequences of which we are now experiencing. But the particular share of Belgium in this destructive work cannot be entirely overlooked, especially as owing to its geographical situation that country must always play a vital part in any system of collective security.

Immediately after his accession to the throne, King Leopold displayed a very marked dislike of the whole conception of collective security and of any kind of international solidarity. Much the same as in most other countries, public opinion in Belgium never was quite unanimous on that issue, or on the more specific question of the maintenance or repudiation of the defensive alliance concluded with France after the last war. But it became soon apparent that critics of the League idea and opponents of the defensive alliance with France received in various subtle ways ever-increasing encouragement from the "Palais" or Court circles.

At first it was only the more uncompromising Flemish Nationalists and the totalitarian Rexists that, from racial or ideological motives, propagated a policy of isolation and of independence and neutrality not only in foreign relations, but also as between democratic and dictatorial régimes abroad. The bulk of the population, both Flemish and Walloon, remained both politically and sentimentally attached to the friendship with France and the other former Allies and to the principles of democracy and liberty. They felt nothing but detestation for Nazi Germany and its ways.

But when Hitler remilitarised the Rhineland and tore up the Locarno treaty in 1936, King Leopold came out into the open. He made his famous statement on the so-called policy of independence that Belgium was in his view henceforth to follow in foreign affairs. All special ties binding Belgium to her former allies and protectors were to be severed, guarantees of the respect of her integrity were to be sought from Germany as well as from Britain and France, and, above all, it was to be clearly understood that the quarrels between great Powers were no concern of Belgium's, and that she would never allow herself to be involved in war unless her own territory was violated.

The new policy, frankly regarded as the King's own, met with considerable opposition in the three great Parties, who got into the habit of forming national coalition governments. Opposition was most persistent in the Socialist party, a little less so in the Liberal party, and weakest in the Catholic party. But in all three, every method of persuasion and pressure was employed to overcome it. Those who refused to be silenced were treated as malcontents and warmongers and barred from influential positions. No political leader known to be lukewarm about the King's foreign policy had the slightest chance to become Foreign Minister or to remain long a member of the Government. M. Spaak, who made himself the most enthusiastic and eloquent supporter and instrument of the King's policy, had a lot of trouble to make his own party, the Socialist, swallow it. But in the end he succeeded, and at last it could be said with some measure of truth that the policy of so-called independence was accepted by a large majority both in the country and in Parliament.

For one brief moment, indeed, Belgium made a courageous stand for collective security. That was when M. Van Zeeland declared at the Council meeting in Geneva that his country was prepared to go *jusqu'au bout* in the policy of sanctions against Italy. But high quarters in Brussels never forgave him that gesture which was probably the true cause of his later political eclipse.

While this policy was gradually forced upon the country, persistent efforts were made to increase the King's power in the State and to put both the Government and Parliament "in their place." More than once King Leopold lectured his ministers in a rather high-handed fashion on this subject, both publicly and in private. Public criticism of these extraordinary proceedings was practically non-existent, applause and flattery in numerous quarters all the more loud and unashamed. Rumours of a coming royal military dictatorship were current for years, definite names were on all lips, and though no tangible constitutional change materialised, an atmosphere and political practice was created which finally enabled the monarch to dispose single-handed of the fate and honour of the country in the way he did. This is where Belgian democracy and its chosen leaders bear a heavy responsibility.

Until last September all responsible Belgian statesmen protested on many occasions that the policy of "independence" had nothing to do with a policy of "neutrality," that, on the contrary, "independence" involved, in the event of war, absolute freedom of choice between various attitudes. But when the war broke out, "independence" was automatically transformed into "neutrality." No small nation devoid of territorial ambition would deliberately choose war if it could be avoided, and Belgium was no exception to this rule. But the sentiment of the overwhelming majority of the nation was altogether beyond doubt: at least nine-tenths of all Belgians, both Flemish and Walloons, were definitely and enthusiastically pro-Ally and anti-Nazi, and they made no secret of it. Prominent political leaders of all parties proclaimed, with President Roosevelt, that the neutrality of the State by no means involved the neutrality of the individual conscience, nor that of the press.

But that was not accepted very long in high quarters. The atmo-

—sphere was such as to raise an almost insuperable obstacle to certain future decisions. Something had, therefore, to be done to modify the atmosphere. Under German pressure, and with the evident approval of high quarters, anti-Nazi propaganda was discouraged, some of the more outspoken pro-Ally papers confiscated and journalists prosecuted, whilst the rabid pro-German propaganda of Degrelle and his Rexist paper remained unmolested.

The precise nature and significance of the part played by King Leopold in the European crisis during the first eight months of the war has largely remained a mystery even to Cabinet ministers. Apart from Mussolini and Hitler, Queen Wilhelmina of Holland ought to know more about that than any living person. But the surest clue to what was actually going on could be found in the line of propaganda of the few almost openly pro-German (and at the same time vociferously royalist) papers published in Belgium. They clamoured mainly for four things. First, no Belgian intervention in the war unless and until the country was actually invaded by one or the other belligerent. That became the official policy from the outset. Secondly, the same defence preparations on the French frontier and on the coast against a British attack as on the German frontier. Partly practised in the first stages of the war, this ostrich policy had to be abandoned later on when repeated and grave warnings could leave no doubt as to the quarter from which the menace to Belgium actually came. Thirdly, no staff conversations or other military consultations with France or Britain in view of a possible German attack. That veto was, of course, essential if a German aggression against Belgium was to have the best chance of success. The veto was, in the main, unfortunately effective, though the time has not yet come to enter into detail on this matter. Fourthly, Belgium must remain neutral if Holland is attacked. There is reason to believe that at one stage that was the German plan. At the height of the crisis, the Belgian Government made a public declaration of practical solidarity with Holland, though assistance was to be neither automatic nor reciprocal. Subsequently, this informal undertaking of solidarity seemed to lose much of its substance.

Thus imperceptibly, and to many unconsciously, the road was opened to the German invasion. One thing at least seemed certain to ninety-nine Belgians out of a hundred: if the attack did come, Belgium would fight desperately on the side of the Allies until victory was won. The greatest argument adduced in favour of the policy of independence by King Leopold and his ministers was that that policy alone was capable of ensuring the complete unity of the nation, both of Flemings and of Walloons, if ever the country was forced to fight for its independence.

And now the very consequences of that policy have enabled the King to order that capitulation to the enemy which, of all conceivable possibilities, seemed to the entire Belgian people the most unthinkable, the most disastrous, and the most degrading. King Leopold was in a position to commit this act because at the very beginning of the war he insisted on being made himself commander-in-chief of the army. Again, his ministers shouldered a heavier responsibility than they knew in pandering to the royal desires.

But the ruler who did this terrible thing never had any intimate human relationship with his people, never had a place in their hearts. Leopold was a singularly unpopular King, and many a story could be told to illustrate this fact. For years he has been notoriously under the influence of his sister Marie-José, wife of the Crown Prince of Italy. It must have been for a long time obvious to any unbiased observer that whatever King Leopold might do or not do, he would resist to the utmost any chance of seeing Belgium involved in the war on one side and Italy on the other. The shadier side of Belgian royal policy has had for years its inspiration in Rome. German influences are also suspected of having to some extent been at work, partly through Queen Elisabeth, who has of late shown remarkable activity on the welfare side of the army, and partly by more direct and sentimental channels affecting the King.

The Belgian Government established in France have officially proclaimed King Leopold "incapable to reign," on the ground that he is no longer a free agent. It was difficult to expect ministers, and even members of Parliament, who had in the past given the ruler far too much latitude, to go farther than that. But from the point of view of the evolution of the war it is essential that the forfeiture of King Leopold should be made abundantly plain. Should the war be a long one, occupied Belgium may play a vital part in its fortunes. She may yet be the graveyard of Hitler aggression. The population now groaning under the conqueror's yoke and its wits sharpened by past tragic experience is undoubtedly determined to have an active part in its own liberation. But it should be given a firm and intelligent lead.

MAN-POWER

IT was inevitable, under the new conditions, that Mr. Bevin's first task as Minister of Labour should be primarily one of exhortation. The men already in the factories had to be urged to put every ounce of effort into increasing supplies of necessary munitions. They had to be called upon to forgo their holidays, to work seven days a week, and to extend overtime to a point at which the strain was bound to become intense and the liability to accident bound to be greatly increased. There was no alternative to this: it simply had to be done. It was the counterpart of the even more prodigious strain put upon our fighting forces during the past few weeks.

But it is important to remember that men can no more labour than they can fight continuously without adequate opportunities for rest. In face of the intense immediate need, increased output—up to the furthest possible limit—had to be *improvised;* but the methods of improvisation, so far from serving as a basis for further organisation, will inevitably lead to serious loss of output unless they are superseded as soon as possible. Mr. Bevin's long-run task—and in this war even long runs are pretty short—is so to reorganise the supply of labour that output can be brought to a satisfactory level without exposing any section of the working force of industry to an impossibly severe continuous strain.

This will require large-scale movements of labour from less to more essential occupations. In the very short run, the demand for more tanks, aeroplanes, and other munitions of war takes precedence over all other claims. But even in the short run this does not mean crowding every possible man and women into factories making munitions of war. It is fully as important to release from unnecessary uses tonnage which can then be employed in bringing munitions from the United States; and of course nothing must be allowed to slow down production in the shipyards. It is, moreover, very important that additional labour needed for munitions shall be taken from the least, and not merely from less, essential branches of production.

An outstanding instance of the importance of this selective transference is the position of agriculture. Though agricultural workers are in a reserved occupation, the land has already lost, we are told, 70,000 of its workers since the outbreak of war, despite the ploughing up of two million acres and the initiation of numerous schemes for expanding agricultural production. Clearly, this drain of men must be stopped at once; and, now that the labourers have received what is probably the largest percentage rise in wages ever granted at one time, no one will object to the decision of the Government forbidding any further workers to leave the land, and compelling those who have recently left it to return if they fall out of other jobs. At 48*s.* a week minimum, the land workers will be still underpaid in comparison with many other kinds of labour; but they will no longer be so terribly underpaid as to make it impossible, even in face of the national emergency, to insist on their staying on the land.

In this instance, the Government has had to take control of wages in order to control labour. It will have to do so in many other cases if the right distribution of man power, which must be secured, is to be carried through without creating serious injustices and, what is immediately of even more importance, a sense of injustice. For the moment, almost every section of the people will do whatever the Government tells it practically without protest or even grumble. But it would be folly to suppose that this mood can last, under the continuous strain of hard and often uncongenial and unfamiliar work, for more than a limited period. There will be grumblers; and unless most men are convinced that the Government is doing its utmost to achieve justice in its handling of the problem, something much more serious than grumbling will develop before long.

Why, then, say some good patriots, let us do full justice by conscribing the entire nation, and putting the workers in the factories under military orders just like their brothers in the armed forces. By all means, if doing so will in truth help us to win the war; but before we resort to such extremes let us remember that the analogy does not really hold good. In the armed forces, men are serving in a system, and under officers, standing right outside the profit-making relation of employer and worker. Snobbery there is in plenty in the forces; but no one supposes that the officer is out to make a profit at the expense of his men, or that when the war is over he will be in a position to order them about, not on the State's behalf, but on his own. On the other hand, in the factories, even if war profits are limited, the men are still working for the employers' profit; and the employers and managers are still mostly expecting to go back to the conditions of unrestricted profit-making when the war ends.

There is, in these circumstances, no real analogy between military and industrial conscription. The workers will feel that they are working for the State, rather than for their immediate employers, in proportion as the State takes real and effective control over industry, eliminates war profits, and sets the employers also working for a wartime "wage" fixed by public authority. But as the State must continue to use the existing employers and managers to run wartime industry, even the fullest temporary control will not prevent the factory worker's relation to his bosses from being very different from the soldier's relation to his officers. Only permanent nationalisation could remove this difference; and even so it would take time for the sense of the old relations in industry to wear away.

As matters stand, industrial conscription and the subjection of the factories to military discipline, far from helping the war effort, would certainly lead to widespread trouble and a sharp fall in output. They would be a godsend to our Fifth Column and to every sea-lawyer and anti-war agitator. Nor is there any need for them, even apart from these reactions; for our industrial effort can be fully organised by much less objectionable means. These means will no doubt involve a considerable element of compulsion, but their basis will be to use compulsion only when it is needed, and only to the extent to which it is needed.

Mr. Bevin is rightly insisting that men should stay in agriculture, coal-mining and forestry and that in the engineering and building trades employers must engage labour only through a Labour Exchange or an approved Trade Union arrangement. This should stop employers stealing workers from one factory to another. It may become necessary to extend the period of notice required, on either side, for a change of job; and it may become necessary, as in the last war, to enrol a voluntary corps of skilled workers who will agree to go wherever they are most needed at the call of the State. It may be necessary to prohibit less essential industries from retaining an unduly large labour force, and to fix proportions in which female labour must be engaged as a condition of retaining indispensable male workers. All these things and many more like them can be done without any imposition of even quasi-military discipline in the factories, and probably without even the Munitions Tribunals whose proceedings caused a good deal of friction during the last war, or the system of "Leaving Certificates" which undoubtedly caused much more.

A LONDON DIARY

As soldiers, reprieved from death, return to relate the incredible scenes at Dunkirk and describe the shortage of tanks and aeroplanes, national feeling rises against the men who took us into war but who were too inefficient, too complacent or too much part of the profit system to wage it. I am not surprised that there is to be a secret session next week, nor should I be surprised if the feeling in the Services, in the House and outside it, drives from their present offices Mr. Chamberlain, Sir Kingsley Wood, Lord Caldecote and one or two others. The danger is too imminent to have at the head of affairs men whose habits of mind preclude them from facing great events. The nobility of Lord Halifax does not make him the ideal Foreign Secretary, nor am I sure that Mr. Eden, admirable as he is in many ways, has the strength and drive for his present post. Of the new Ministers, Mr. Amery can be relied upon in the tightest place, and there are several of the present under-Secretaries who are of first-class calibre. Among the new members of the Cabinet, Herbert Morrison and Ernest Bevin have at once leapt into prominence, and Lord Beaverbrook is displaying lots of energy. Perhaps the most important discovery is Clem Attlee, who has discovered himself and shown in a crisis new capacities of leadership. The new Attlee revealed himself at the Labour Party Conference at Bournemouth; since then he has squared his shoulders, and talked straight out to the House as a leader, throwing off the diffidence with which he has too often hidden his abilities. The events of the next fortnight may be decisive politically in this country, as well as on the field of battle. The nation has accepted controls of unexampled severity. The Government now have the powers of a totalitarian State. What matters now is that the men who lead us should have courage, a true vision of the essentials of democracy for which we are fighting, and should be known and trusted by every worker throughout the land.

* * *

Some day a great play may be written round the character of Leopold of Belgium. Explanations of his behaviour vary between two extremes; some people go so far as to suggest that he is the instrument of a diabolical Nazi plot to lure the French and British into Belgium to their destruction; other kindly souls assume that he has just lost his nerve. There is no evidence for either of these views; the real story is certainly complex. I have gathered the following suggestive facts from people who knew Leopold. First, perhaps in reaction against his father's romantic nationalism in the last war, Leopold has long been a confused type of pacifist, and his experience of the muddle of Belgian democracy and his detestation of the Popular Front in France have made him anti-democratic and reinforced a naturally authoritarian temper. Add to this that he has had close contacts with Italy through his sister, who has married the son of the King of Italy and that his mother is a Wittelsbach, who has retained the dominating qualities of the Bavarian Royal Family. Further he has increasingly relied on a certain General Van Overstraeten, who, acting as his aide-de-camp, has given orders to Belgian generals, and altogether played too much the part of a king. Leopold was not, of course, a Rexist, but there is good evidence that Van Overstraeten was trying to do a similar job on the king's behalf and organise a kind of monarchical Fascism. People who have known him, however, emphasise that his pacifism, or possibly one should say his intense horror of war, was genuine, and it may have been this, rather than pro-Nazi leanings, that led him to refuse collaboration with the French before the war and which prevented him giving the kind of lead in Belgium which would have resulted in the construction of a formidable line of defence on the German frontier. One can see how a young man caught between a patriotic tradition and a dislike of again playing the role of his father, would go on hoping for his country's neutrality; how he would not have the strength to override popular feeling in favour of resisting Germany, and would therefore go on from day to day, hoping somehow to escape the war, unable to escape and unable to lead in either direction. When the Germans actually invaded, his Ministers and his people were unanimously in favour of fighting, but he would not make the speeches expected of Albert's son. When the army was driven back and Belgian villages and towns were being bombed and burnt and the soldiers were short of food and ammunition, one can see how readily Leopold would seize the chance of stopping what he would regard as a worse than useless slaughter. Perhaps the Nazis threatened the complete destruction of the country if Belgium went on fighting; probably they flattered him into believing that he could reconstruct and even enlarge his country in peace if he surrendered. Here are all the materials for great drama; the external tragedy, the king's conflict of emotions about his father, his contempt for the politicians, his fear of being a traitor, his greater fear of war, the use made of these fears by Nazi agents, and the final moment of decision at a time when surrender involved the betrayal of his country's allies. Note finally that the natural comment that everything might be forgiven him except his failure to tell the British and French of what he intended omits the essential point that if he had announced his intention he would almost certainly have been prevented from carrying it out.

* * *

Last autumn I remember being told in Cambridge that Lord Haw-Haw had made a special announcement that Cambridge would be bombed. Since then I have heard similar stories in my favourite village and in many other places, and I gather that there is scarcely a district in the country where it is not commonly believed that Lord Haw-Haw has tried to frighten the population with similar threats, often with, it is said, remarkably accurate details of the countryside and possible objectives. I do not often listen to Haw-Haw myself, but since one of his aims is to terrify I assumed that such threats were part of his stock-in-trade. We now know that no such threats have ever come from Haw-Haw, and all the stories about his uncanny knowledge of places, and of the speed (said to mean that information was sent to him by private wireless) are untrue. The latest example of such a rumour is that Haw-Haw has told people that the local town-hall clock is two minutes slow or something of the sort. This is believed in scores of places. Actually he has never yet mentioned a clock in any broadcast—any more than anyone has seen a nun with hairy arms. Someone knows someone who knows someone who saw the nuns or heard the broadcast. . . . But who starts these rumours? The Ministry of Information has been investigating, and believe that they have traced one to its source. A man in Mansfield has been convicted and fined £10 for falsely attributing to Haw-Haw information about a decision of the local Council made only one hour and a quarter before the Hamburg broadcast. On cross-examination he admitted that "his wife told him something about what a Mrs. Robins had said should be cleared up by the police." Rumour tracing is a fascinating sport.

* * *

There are rumours of many kinds: some of them cruel and wicked.

Someone may be connected with a pacifist who may now be a useful member of society entitled to his opinion and able some day to serve his country in more valuable ways. Some pseudo-patriot starts a rumour: he is a German, a Fifth Columnist and his wife or sister-in-law had a suspicious German alien working for her (actually an Austrian refugee) . . . and so forth. Then some press patriot, effectively doing the Fifth Columnist job of sowing panic and distrust, adds grist to the dirty mill. Take the leading article in the *Sunday Pictorial* of June 2nd. Except in *Der Stürmer* I have seen nothing more nauseating. Headed *Pacifists*, the article pours out its venom on "parasites," "individualists" and "internationalists," and then by a swift sleight-of-hand arrives at the conclusion (in black capital letters), that "these young perverts, idiots, and racketeers are dangerous." Now look for a fine new crop of rumours. The followers of George Lansbury and Dick Sheppard are to be smudged with a new filth. Hitler used the same trick when he wanted to justify the murder of Röhm.

* * *

After a period of pleasant sleep the nation has awakened to the real dangers of invasion. The pendulum has swung right across. The police have arrested Germans even when their records are beyond dispute and their work of national importance. Magistrates are passing ridiculously severe sentences and other absurdities are being committed. The shock of the last weeks has been terrific; we shall regain balance soon. Meanwhile the really important event, the arrest of a man in a key position in the American Embassy, has been little remarked. Here is a comic case of military hysteria. A British farmer in the west of England organised and led the local parashots. He was summoned to a neighbouring military headquarters and told that he must give up his command and that he could not be a parashot at all because—will you believe it?—he employed a sixteen-year-old refugee boy on his farm!

* * *

I see that J. B. S. Haldane is the new chairman of the board of the *Daily Worker*. The paper itself is a good deal more moderate in tone than a few weeks ago, and has apparently overcome its leanings to pro-Nazi reporting. Of course it denounces the Churchill-Labour Cabinet as the protector of profiteers and demands a new government which will "find the working-class way out of war." According to Palme Dutt such a government would "appeal to all peoples over the heads of the governments," although he admits that "the war has developed so deeply that it is a difficult and laborious task to extricate the people from war." Even Harold Nicolson's idea of a Mr. Sensible in each street to counter dangerous rumours comes in for some rough handling. Poor Mr. Sensible will be just a Nazi *Blockwart*, an agent of Mr. Churchill's Gestapo. I find it very difficult to discover precisely what the Communists' attitude to the prosecution of the war is. They are bitterly indignant about the leadership which left the B.E.F. ill-equipped for fighting with the Nazis. Simultaneously they are fiercely opposed to the speed-up in the factories. Yet they want more A.R.P. shelters. A friend of mine last week-end attended a remarkable debate at Oxford, at which Ivor Montagu put the Communist case with such caution that even his most enthusiastic undergraduate supporters seemed to be uncertain what the case was. Challenged to say whether Russia would view with equanimity the overthrow of the Churchill-Labour Government, he replied that if we were defeated Russia might rescue us from Nazi oppression. When it was suggested that the Labour influence in the Government might increase in the coming months and finally end in a real Workers' Government, he replied that Communist dialectics recognised that changes in quantity may produce a change in quality. Which means, presumably, that if Labour does really well in the Government the Communists will in due course give them their support. I had the impression that the Communists are in a quandary. They naturally hate finding themselves put into the same category as the Fascists and the leaders have obviously had to meet a great deal of criticism from their rank and file. They certainly do not want the conquest of this country by Hitler, and they also are not sure whether the Russian line may not change in a few weeks. These factors probably account for the caution of their speeches and writings at present. They were caught on the wrong leg in September, 1939, and now they are taking no chances.

* * *

I have just had a very interesting letter from Bertrand Russell who has been living in America for the last eighteen months. He writes:

> The news from Europe is unbearably painful. We all wish that we were not so far away, although we could serve no useful purpose if we were at home. Ever since the war began I have felt that I could not go on being a pacifist; but I have hesitated to say so, because of the responsibility involved. If I were young enough to fight myself I should do so, but it is more difficult to urge others. Now, however, I feel that I ought to announce that I have changed my mind, and I would be glad if you could find an opportunity to mention in THE NEW STATESMAN that you have heard from me to this effect.

I am not surprised to have this candid statement from Bertrand Russell. His pacifism has always been of the rational sort. I well remember reviewing his book, *Which Way to Peace?* in 1936. Its publication was a political event of some importance; it stated the case for British isolation as well as it could be stated and it clarified the minds of many who were confused and hesitant. I came to the conclusion that the argument could not be sustained; the war then raging in Spain was a test case. It meant that however unprovocative and weak a country was, it would be attacked from within by a Fascist movement supported from without, and I held, I still think rightly, that it was a definite stage in the German offensive against all the ideas and institutions which we hold valuable in the West. It is like Bertrand Russell, who has always been the most candid of thinkers, to admit that he was wrong. I also respect him for not urging a violent course on other people when he himself is too old to fight.

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Among the many brave men who have not come back from Belgium is Sir Arnold Wilson. He is reported missing. I hope that this means that he may yet live to read these remarks. For some years Sir Arnold has interested me as much as anyone in English public life. He is a curious mixture, a very tough soldier with an almost legendary reputation for swimming the Hellespont, a scholar with an astonishing memory and at the same time the most inaccurate of reporters, a man who preferred to learn America by striding along the roads instead of dining with the great, an admirer of Hitler and an unscrupulous propagandist for Mussolini and Franco. He also took immense pains to produce the best exposures of one of the most shady sides of the city. He had, I think, a strong strain of brutality and a natural liking for regimentation. In his last speech in the House, he showed that his British loyalty overcame his Fascist inclinations. Only a few weeks ago he wrote to Richard Coventry, who had reviewed his last book in this paper, saying that he was proud to regard our article as an obituary notice; he had joined up as a rear-gunner in the R.A.F.

* * *

To my surprise several people were upset because I quoted an example of Cockney humour last week about the surrender of Leopold following a day of national prayer. One correspondent retorts that I did not wait long enough; it was the miraculous deliverance of the B.E.F. that answered prayer. There is subject matter for a book here. In brief, my view is this. The world has lost something valuable by the decline in the habit of formal praying. For prayer may be a great psychological force. It is a deliberate act of consecration which sets the will and clarifies the imagination of those who pray. Therefore those who pray sincerely often have a personal power denied to those who do not. If prayers are answered that is because some of those who pray know better what they want and seek it more consistently and powerfully than those who allow their desires to be conflicting and desultory. But to suggest that there is a Providence which will save British soldiers from German guns because prayers are offered for them, and reject the equally sincere prayers for German soldiers seems to me an unchristian conception.

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Here are two verbatim stories from the Midlands. One of my friends works in a First Aid post and last week she came in to overhear a loquacious lady saying, "My dear, you need not be alarmed. They cannot fire their guns." "Why?" "Because they have no fingers." "No fingers?" "Yes, my dear. You see when the poor young boys are sitting in the aeroplane they do not want to jump out. So when the trapdoor is opened they cling on to the side and the Nazi officer lashes their fingers till they are cut off. So when they come down they are quite harmless." The rest of the unit received this story without comment. On returning home to her house in a suburban road my friend looked over the fence and saw her neighbour gardening. Again the talk turned on parachutists and her neighbour said, "You know we are thinking we may have to evacuate." "And where would you go?" "Well, we are thinking of going to Hoylake. My husband says the golf is so good."

* * *

Here is a gem reported in the *Sunday Times*:

> A Parisian trader, condemned to eight months' imprisonment for having spoken of King Leopold in derogatory terms, is appealing on the ground that he showed remarkable foresight.

That seems to me really funny—though it may not seem so funny to the Parisian tradesman.

CRITIC.

THIS ENGLAND

Our prize of 5/- for the contribution at the head of the column goes this week to Norman Blood.

All cuttings should be addressed to "This England," 1 Great Turnstile, High Holborn, W.C.1.

For the second week in succession the Crown Office and the College of Arms have had to work at top speed in the preparation of patents of peerages. —*Daily Telegraph.*

Are we so degenerate, so lacking in trust in our leaders and in our ultimate destiny as to doubt that the great institution of the British Empire is divinely inspired to be the instrument of our Maker's purpose here on earth?—*Oxford Mail.*

We are in short faced with the usual manifestations of dirty political manoeuvres such as one so commonly witnesses within the democratic parliamentary system. The Socialists represent the party which refused to co-operate in the Government. Their obvious tactics are to wait for some sort of grievance and, having taken no responsibility, they are then in a position, to launch a violent attack and try to seize power themselves. Some people might consider that that sort of thing was not patriotic; but, of course, patriotism hardly comes under discussion when we are discussing really progressive "democratic principles"!—*Weekly Review.*

After God, the Empire was surely the greatest power for good in the world. When trouble began, he said, other nations clustered around it like chickens around a hen. The Empire had enemies, continued the Major, but he believed them to be all part of God's plan in using the British Empire as an instrument for bringing about a better world.—*The Brecon and Radnor Express.*

SPAIN AND STRATEGY

[FROM A CORRESPONDENT]

IN Spain the Falangists, now the only Party, are crying out for Gibraltar, Lord Halifax has made a remarkable declaration of friendship in a message to the *ABC* of Madrid, and Sir Samuel Hoare has been sent post-haste to the British Embassy to nurse the tender plant of Spanish neutrality.

No doubt General Franco and his associates are anxious to keep the country out of war. The recent Trade and Payments Agreement with this country suggests that he has no desire to quarrel with Britain and France. But in these days, when the expansionist Powers have perfected "the attack from within," good intentions are a drug on the market, and he would be a bold man who would prophesy that Sir Samuel Hoare, in the role of the fairy wish-fulfilment, can have any more success with "appeasement" in Spain than Britain has had in Italy.

The Spanish people are suffering from exhaustion and a shortage of food, and a policy of friendship, as Lord Halifax said, is "in keeping with the traditional relations between the two countries." Yet those of us who have some knowledge of the Spanish background can scarcely subscribe to the officially inspired optimism. And after so many bitter experiences of the fruits of the "ostrich" policy it is a duty to warn the British public against the dangers ahead in the Western Mediterranean. This is not the time to lean back on the pillows of dogma and orthodoxy and "hope for the best." On the contrary, as a leader-writer in the *Manchester Guardian* observed the other day, "anticipation of the worst and preparing to meet it in time have become the highest military and civil virtue." At the risk, therefore, of incurring the charge of "loading the dice against ourselves," with which Mr. Chamberlain used to chasten his critics, it is urgently necessary to draw attention to certain unpleasant facts.

To begin with—notice the Foreign Secretary's asseveration of the British Government's "firmest intention to respect Spanish neutrality so long as it is respected by others." This is the ordinary language of diplomacy, it would seem, in line with the Government's attitude to the Scandinavian nations and Holland. It happens also to be a textual reiteration of a passage in a Foreign Office statement of May 16th (which was itself a re-affirmation of the undertaking given by Mr. R. A. Butler in a speech of April 24th); a very necessary reminder seeing that the principal Spanish newspapers when reproducing that statement, which was transmitted from London by the official agency, EFE, had carefully omitted the second limb of the phrase. They sought to give the impression, that is to say, that England's pledge to respect Spanish neutrality was unconditional.

Such distortion of a British official statement is of a piece with the general behaviour of the Spanish press. From the first, under the Franco dispensation, the principal newspapers (with the exception at times, of *ABC*), have vied with one another in vilifying the pluto-democracies—in a lickspittle attitude towards Spain's German and Italian masters. Latterly, we may remember, the traducing and misrepresentation went so far as to provoke a mild rebuke in the House of Commons from Mr. R. A. Butler.

It is surely significant that the Spanish press and radio should suppress all reference to the Pope's expression of sympathy for Holland, Belgium and Luxembourg, Queen Wilhelmina's appeal to the King of Italy and President Roosevelt's remarks on America's feeling of shock and indignation at that invasion. Previously, taking its cue from Italy, the Spanish press preserved an eloquent silence about M. Reynaud's recent bid for a Mediterranean understanding. It certainly looks as if Spanish *public* opinion is as much under the Nazi harrow as, say, Hungarian. It will be argued that, nevertheless, *private* opinions do not coincide—that Catholic susceptibilities are deeply offended by the official subservience to Germany, etc. All one can say, judging from the experience of recent years—in Italy as well as in Spain—is that the Catholic conscience is at a discount when it comes up against the exigencies of power-politics.

And in terms of strategy, which dominates all things to-day, where and how does the new Spain stand? The purpose of Hitler and Mussolini in helping General Franco to smash Republican Spain is now surely plain as a pikestaff. They were concerned to secure power-positions for use in the scheme of grand strategy worked out by the "geo-political" school under Professor Haushofer in Munich and his brother in Berlin—and proclaimed by the egregious Professor Ewald Banse as early as 1933. The existence of air and submarine bases under Axis control in Galicia, in southern Spain and in Morocco (opposite Gibraltar) was always pooh-poohed by our sahibs. And the conventional retort to Captain Liddell Hart and others who drew attention to these dangers ahead was that England and France, states possessing decisive naval and economic power, could always maintain their ascendancy in this corner of the Mediterranean. Moreover, it was said, we could rely on Britain's oldest ally, Portugal, to give us facilities for dealing with any mischief in the Peninsula. On these grounds the traditional principle of averting at all cost the danger of a hostile Power controlling Spain was jettisoned in favour of the umbrella of non-intervention. Recent developments in the war have unfortunately given point to the warnings of the Cassandras and entitled us to be sceptical about the premises of tradition and orthodoxy and—let us make no mistake about it—a German General Staff which has "rolled up" the map of Europe on which British foreign policy has been based for centuries (by the invasion of Norway and the Low Countries) is scarcely likely to neglect the possibilities of Spain.

It may be only a rumour that the Spanish Government has its plans all ready, under German-Italian direction, to occupy the coastal regions of Portugal so as to prevent the Allies using Lisbon and other Atlantic harbours. What we do know is that, with batteries at Algeciras and in the hills behind, long-range guns commanding the Straits and Italian-controlled bases at Cadiz and Seville and in the Balearics, the Axis Powers are well set for the fulfilment of their ambition to make Gibraltar untenable (the British public was never allowed, we may remember, to see the documentary film on "The Menace to Gibraltar" which was duly shown in America): that Spanish air lines, including those connecting the mainland with Morocco and the Canary Islands, are under the control of the German *Lufthansa*—and there is a network of air communications with Italy: that the Military Commander of the Balearic Isles, General Kindelan, Chief of the Franco Air Force during the war, is the man who boasted in the summer of 1938 that Spanish planes could easily bomb and destroy towns in the south of France from Bordeaux to Marseilles: that a substantial amount of German and Italian war material, including 1,200 planes, remained in Spain after the civil war, bought by the Spanish Government, and that Spanish resources have since been vastly expanded: that there are 50,000–60,000 Germans at large in Spain—240 of them in the service of the German Embassy in Madrid—and a number of Italian officers attached to the General Staff who have superintended the building of frontier roads and fortifications along the Pyrenees frontier: that in the middle of April the Spanish fleet was called to the Mediterranean, the movement coinciding, curiously, with Italy's naval manoeuvres: that, in short, *from the point of view of war-strategy*, the only thing that matters these days, the new Spain is to all intents and purposes an Italo-German Protectorate.

If any more evidence is required that the umbilical cord connecting the Spanish body politic with the German-Italian alliance still exists, we have it in the recent Spanish Military Missions to Berlin and Rome—another such mission has been announced this week—and in the

tone of the daily press and radio*. The Italians are no more popular than they ever were; if since the end of the civil war Italian influence has appeared to gain at the expense of German, it is not from any free choice or pressure on the part of Señor Serrano Suñer and his friends. It is by the compulsion of geography. (The men who hold the key positions in Spain to-day, however, are and remain Germanophile, and they know perfectly well that their hold on power depends on the German domination of Europe.) On the day when Signor Mussolini decides to enter the war on Germany's side we are likely to see grim confirmation of the declarations of Señor Suñer in the spring of 1937 and in the newspaper *Arriba* on August 10th, 1938—"Franco will know how to be the right-hand of Rome."

Not that the Spanish Government is expected to depart from the letter of neutrality—at first, at any rate. The country is in no condition to wage war. Neither is it in any condition, however, to withstand German-Italian pressure. The one stratum of the Spanish bourgeoisie which was traditionally in favour of the *status quo* was the Liberal-Republican, which the conservative counter-revolutionary and the *Falange* forces have combined to revile and suppress. Besides, the *Dynamik* of Hitler's recent successes, duly magnified in the press, must make a terrific impression. To-day, anyhow, it is difficult to dispute the statement by Señor Alvarez del Vayo in the American *Nation* that "there are forms of neutrality more dangerous than direct participation."

One assumes that the makers of high policy in this country are alive to these facts about Spain. The common attitude that "Spaniards are a proud, independent people who have always got rid sooner or later of interfering foreigners" comes up sharp against the hard fact that a small contingent of these "foreigners" occupied Gibraltar 236 years ago, and (in spite of the fact that in that war of the Spanish Succession Britain backed the wrong horse—the Habsburg candidature for the Spanish Crown) they are still there! Again, money talks, it is true. But it will have to be eloquent on a stupendous scale to overcome the obstacles thrown up by the latest development of power-politics. With Mussolini as the instrument, a move in Spain—in conjunction, perhaps, with some plan to stir up trouble in Ireland—would be entirely in keeping with the enveloping strategy on a grand scale which Hitler has made his own.

THUMBS UP

I HAVE never cared much for defiant gesticulations. To stick the tongue out in childhood always seemed to me to be as ineffective as it was distorting to the countenance. That other gesture by which one set a thumb to one's nose and spread out the fingers seemed equally graceless and unworthy of a small human being with an immortal soul. As a boy, I admit, I enjoyed the antics of the retainers in *Romeo and Juliet* who made such a fuss about biting their thumbs at each other; but at that age I enjoyed everything in the theatre that Shakespeare meant me to enjoy. If Sir Toby Belch had stuck his tongue out at Malvolio, I was a sound enough Shakespearean to have laughed at it with delight. The revival of defiant gesticulation in modern times, however, has no Shakespearean warrant to make it enjoyable. It is a kind of compulsory warlike play-acting imposed on naturally peace-loving human beings. The Fascist salute and especially the Nazi salute with its ridiculous repetitive accompaniment, "Heil Hitler!" are mere bombast on the part of a right arm that might be better employed. (Even the Nazis are human, however, in their enforcement of the salute on their fellow-creatures. Was it not announced a year or two ago that "the case of a civil servant suffering from rheumatism or other disability of his right arm is provided for by Dr. Frick. Such a man may salute with his left arm." Do not believe that humanity exists only in the Allied countries).

In England, after childhood, gesticulation (by which I mean any manipulation of the limbs or features as a substitute for words) usually suffers a decline. There is, it is true, an extremely offensive way of expressing the feelings without words, which is known as "giving the raspberry," but even this, though occasionally resorted to by grown-up men, is seldom indulged in by an octogenarian. It may be that we become more articulate and so less dependent on sign language with the years. One thing is certain: the gestures that survive most commonly into maturity in these islands are those that express politeness and good-humour—the lifting of the hat, the bow, the nod, the smile. Even when the arm is raised, it is almost invariably in a wave of friendliness, almost never in a gesture of defiance to some persons absent and unnamed. Gestures of defiance, it seems, like witches, cannot cross running water.

The novel gesture of "thumbs up," which has recently spread from England to France, is up to a point a gesture of defiance, but it differs from all the other gestures of defiance that I know in being a good-humoured gesture of defiance. Soldiers and sailors who have been through the furnace, when they hold their thumbs up, are always smiling. Thumbs-up, indeed, might be described as a manual smile. I sometimes distrust the photographs in the newspapers, suspecting that the photographer has persuaded his subjects to pose for him; but it is impossible to doubt the genuineness of the best of those photographs of returned fighting men with their thumbs up. Here we see the symbolic gesture of a new heroic age, which is as good-humoured as it is heroic. It has done as much, I imagine, to spread confidence and cheerfulness among naturally apprehensive mortals as did the poetry of Tyrtaeus in the great days of the Greeks.

Of the origin of the gesture I have been able to discover nothing. Some people trace it back to the Roman amphitheatre, where the spectators shut up their thumbs in their fists if they wished a gladiator's life to be spared. But the modern thumbs-up gesture seems to me to be totally unlike that. Why the thumb should be chosen in all these gestures it is difficult to say. This digit—defined in the *Oxford Dictionary* as "the short, thick inner digit of the human hand, opposable to the fingers, and distinguished from them by having only two phalanges"—is seldom used in the gesticulations of common life. In Scandinavian countries, according to the authorities, "There's my thumb on it" is, or was, a popular saying, referring to the custom of licking the thumb when sealing a bargain. But what genius taught the modern Englishman to hold his thumbs up as a presage of victory, or when he did so, is beyond conjecture.

Not being a fighting man, I have not myself yet made the gesture, but I felt greatly tempted to do so the other day in a London restaurant. At the next table to me sat two men, one of them white-haired, in the uniforms of British officers. The white-haired man, I gathered, was on home service. He did nothing but grouse through the meal. He groused because somebody owed him five pounds ten. He groused because somebody else had sold him an out-of-date revolver. Then he went on to denounce politicians, remarking that he had "no use for politicians of any kind whatever." I could have forgiven all this, for it is human to want to be paid five pounds ten if it is owing to one, and it is human to denounce politicians though those who know better, like Professor Trevelyan, aver that the war against Napoleon was victoriously fought not only on sea and on the battlefield, but in the House of Commons. What I thought unforgivable in the old man, however, was the grumbling sentence in which he went on to say: "We have no more use for the French than the French have for us. You know what they called us in the last war—'*sales Anglais*.'"

Had I been a brave man, unafflicted with shyness in approaching strangers of whom I disapprove, I should have leaned over towards him and, adapting Stanley's phrase, addressed him in the words: "Major Quisling, I presume?" "Sir," I should have gone on, "perhaps you are a paid member of the Fifth Column. If you are not, you are doing five pounds ten-shillingsworth of work for it for nothing by talking like that in public places." I could not help wondering what effect talk at once so imbecile, so old-fashioned and so truculent would have had on me if I had been a Frenchman. I might have regarded it as a typical expression of English opinion at a time when Englishmen and Frenchmen are more closely bound together than ever before in history. Hence, if I had not been timid and shy, I should have told him that he was a disgrace to the uniform he wore, that he deserved to be court-martialled, that he was a dismal Jimmy, and I should have held my thumbs up close to his eyes in the hope of inspiring him to lead a better life. Alas, however, I am timid and shy: so I went on dumbly eating my piece of excellent Cheshire cheese.

I doubt whether there has ever been a time in which the English people have shown a greater spirit than in the last fortnight. The beautiful refusal of the common man to accept disaster as anything but a passing incident raises the heart like a song. I met a countryman the other day, a veteran of the last war, whose son had been brought home wounded, and asked him how the boy was. He told me that he had been wounded in the leg but was getting better. Then he added, as he took his pipe out of his mouth and nodded in the direction of Flanders: "Proper scrap out there." The words seemed to me to be a magical example of the English genius for meiosis—the genius that keeps a people calm amid catastrophe.

* e.g., *Arriba*, May 28th (quoted by Reuter) commenting on Sir Samuel Hoare's appointment: "We feel the reason for this high distinction, which pleases us, is the difficult and sad peril in which Britain finds itself."

It was characteristic of the English spirit, too, that white-clad cricketers were going about their business on Saturday on the village greens in the south within hearing of the Flanders guns. As I sat in a garden, I could hear the dull thud of war shaking the air and, mingled with it, that ever-delightful sound—the sound of a cricket-ball struck hard with a bat. How sane the world seemed, with boys playing their games till the last moment of the call-up, and how insane as the thud of approaching war repeated itself! The world at peace was always beautiful in May and June, but it seems doubly beautiful when we gaze on fragments of it in a world at war.

Never did the song of the yellowhammer sound more restful in its sweetness. It has always seemed to me to call up a world in which there was an eternal Sabbath of peace—a world lying idle and at rest in the sunshine, with a million million flowers as bright as the sun. As I listened to it during the week-end I lived in that world for at least an instant. The parachutists against whom the villagers are preparing were more distant than Arabia, and the guns were silent.

Yet lovelier even than the song of a bird is the courage one sees all about one—the courage of soldiers and the courage of those who love them and grieve to see them go. As I sat in the train for London on Monday, a soldier showed his wife and two daughters, one of them an infant in arms, into the carriage, and said good-bye to them as, after kissing them, he went off to return to duty. His wife was all smiles and kept telling the older child, who was between two and three years old, to wave her hand at the window and say "Good-bye, Daddy," till the train was leaving the station. The child waved and said "Good-bye, Daddy" again and again, and the mother continued to smile. The soldier himself could scarcely bear to turn his face towards them as he waved a last good-bye. The train moved off. The mother, no longer needing to keep up appearances and no longer able to do so, wept broken-heartedly above the child at her breast.

Who could have helped feeling the profoundest admiration for that valiant woman? The older child, luckily, was too young to know how human beings suffer, and, her father being out of sight, thought of nothing but insisting that her mother should give her a bun to eat. She became aware of the perils of life only when the train suddenly entered a tunnel, and she howled in terror in the darkness. Then, as suddenly, the train emerged into the gold air of the day, and all was once more right with the world.

I always feel an optimist myself when I emerge from a tunnel, I accept the light at the end as a prophecy; and I could not help longing that it may prove to be so for that grief-stricken woman and her children. She, too, it seemed to me, had courage of the thumbs-up sort, and her name is Englishwoman. Y.Y.

TIME AND THE HOUR

French infantry divisions are more mobile than the German infantry and have a larger proportion of tanks.

Every day that passes brings us greater strength . . . we can choose our opportunity no matter how long we have to wait.—*Assurance of Victory Pamphlet*, Ministry of Information.

This time at least there has been no strategic surprise; the armies of Holland and Belgium and North-Eastern France have been preparing and maturing their plans.—*Times* Military Correspondent, May 11th.

ANAESTHETISED what time the *Blitz* was brewing,
Lest we succumbed to jittery alarms,
We were informed how warplanes were "accruing,"
How we could boast full parity in arms.

We were advised, lest hearts of oak might flutter,
Time was with the Allies and triumph sure
If we would cheerfully consume less butter,
And wait until the Victory Bonds mature.

We were assured offensives must be static,
It scarcely signified if lines were breached
Since mechanised advance was so erratic
It stopped itself before the goal was reached.

We have been soothed as neutral States went under,
Each conquest shown a death-trap to the foe
(Though if they make one more strategic blunder
Few experts will be left to tell them so).

Back on our last defences we are driven,
We have been drugged but now our sight is clear;
Time was with us but time will not be given,
We have lost time and now the hour is here.

SAGITTARIUS

THE STORY OF MRS. ALVING

AT the Duchess Theatre a great foreign actress may be seen nightly playing, with vehement and delicate feeling, one of the most tragic parts in modern drama. It is to Mr. Cochran we owe this chance of seeing Katina Paxinou again, whose performance as Electra, and as the Queen in *Hamlet*, thrilled crowded houses at His Majesty's a year ago. It was to him also we owed our last chance of seeing Duse (to many perhaps their first and last), and that superb artist the elder Guitry: lovers of acting will always be grateful to Mr. Cochran. Judging from the attendance on the second night and the third (for I could not resist returning) Mme. Paxinou is playing to scanty though enthusiastic audiences. Are there then so few in London who appreciate fine acting and fine drama? No: not as few empty stalls at the Duchess Theatre might suggest. The War? Yes, the War, of course. But that is not the only explanation: there is also a widespread notion that Ibsen's *Ghosts* is a dingy old problem-play, and that is the notion I wish to combat in this article.

It was as a moral and social reformer that Ibsen first made an impression abroad. Here his ablest admirers were men and women in whom the reforming instincts were strong, as is shown in that vivacious and vigorous commentary, Bernard Shaw's *Quintessence of Ibsenism*, which expounds with admirable clarity the criticism of current morality and society contained in each play. But the Drama of Ideas inevitably loses its hold on men's imaginations after a time. Such plays first raise a hubbub of discussion; then, either those ideas become widely accepted and therefore commonplace, or society changes sufficiently to make the dramatists indignation seem at any rate exaggerated. In England people still see Ibsen with the eyes of his first English discoverers as a great reforming force, now naturally somewhat spent: they forget Ibsen the artist. They forget that his plays are works of art; that he is the greatest artist who has handled the form we call *modern* drama, which is different from that of the Greeks, the Renaissance, of Molière and Racine. He protested himself against being interpreted as a dramatist mainly anxious to advocate this or that reform. He disclaimed, for instance, having intentionally worked for the women's rights movement. "To me," he said, in one of his rare speeches, "this problem has seemed the problem of humanity in general. And if you read my works carefully you will understand this. True, I think it desirable to solve the problem of women's rights along with others; but that has not been my whole purpose: *my task has been the description of humanity*." Each generation throws up writers capable of dealing with burning questions of the hour; Ibsen's real subject-matter was something deeper and more permanent: the most important aspect of his work is that he is the dramatist of the soul.

When *Ghosts* was first published in 1881, the audacity of introducing on the stage the taboo subject of venereal disease, the ferocity of the satire against the Church in the person of Pastor Manders, and the awful doom of Oswald, deflected attention (as they still do apparently) from the real seat of drama, which is Mrs. Alving herself. To those who do not see this, the play must seem not a tragedy, but—to quote the words of my colleague Agate—"an inquisition into moral expediency, ending up with matter for a coroner's inquest": in short, a play which except for Mme. Paxinou's performance was hardly worth reviving. On the other hand, once attention is fixed on the soul of Mrs. Alving, which the insight of the actress makes easy, *Ghosts* will reveal itself as a profound tragedy and a masterpiece of construction. In the space of twenty-four consecutive hours is packed the life of a remarkable woman: her hopes, her longings, her sufferings and her defeat. There are two strains of tragedy in the play; an outward tragedy—which is the victory of a fate predetermined from the hour of her son's birth, and an inward tragedy, which is the story of an heroic will that had surmounted almost incredible obstacles both within and without itself, broken at the very hour when its battle for freedom—freedom from a detestable past, freedom at last to think and to feel—had been apparently won. If this is not the stuff of true tragedy, I do not know what tragedy is.

When we first see Mrs. Alving she is a widow approaching fifty, handsome, composed, sympathetic. We notice (and how Mme. Paxinou helped us!) that though she has her own views, she is considerate towards the beliefs of her old friend Pastor Manders; gently maintaining her right however to independent thought, but making it easy for him even to propitiate more bigoted religious opinions than his own by not insuring the Orphanage which she has founded in her husband's memory, and is to be opened the next day. Something about her suggests that she has probably won her serenity on

hard terms. That she is a devoted mother we sense the moment her only son, who has just returned from Paris, comes into the room (how charmingly the actress greeted him!); also, that there was probably something sinister in her past married life, for she is oddly upset by Manders' seeing in Oswald a strong likeness to his father. The young man then talks about an artist's life in Paris, and to the Pastor's horror extols excitedly its sexual freedom. As soon as Oswald has gone he turns on his mother, speaking no longer as a friend but as a priest. Had she not run away from her husband after one year of marriage—and most inconsiderately taken refuge with him? Had not his command that she should not judge her husband led to many years of happy wedded life during which her flighty husband had become a public benefactor and model landlord? She had then failed as a mother, sending her only child from home at the age of seven—with the deplorable results they had just heard. Then she turns on her old friend, whom she had loved before she had been persuaded to marry the rich and popular Counsellor Alving, and tells Manders what those nineteen years of marriage had really been like: how her husband had continued to live a dissolute, drunken life; how she had been forced to send her child from home to be out of harm's way, and how, finally, an intrigue of Alving's with their maid which led to the birth of Regina, now a servant in the house, had put power into her own hands. It was she, Mrs. Alving, who by her management had built up her husband's reputation as a landlord and benefactor all those years, while he lay drinking on the sofa and reading the Court Guide, or improvised, as he became more diseased, little makeshift orgies with her taking part. The effect of this revelation on Pastor Manders can be imagined, and spirited as Mr. Hannen's playing was, I think he might have registered a more complete dejection. She has hardly finished telling him how she discovered her husband's relation with Regina's mother, when a startled cry from Regina off-stage in the dining-room where she is with Oswald, and the sound of a falling chair, reaches her ears: "Ghosts!" The past is not dead, but reincarnated.

I have given a somewhat full account of the first act, for it establishes what is so necessary to a conception of the tragedy, the courage and endurance of the woman on whom the blows of fate now fall. Oswald reveals to her that he is a sick man, suffering from a disease which he supposes he has contracted through his own fault, also his resolve to take Regina back with him to Paris. At first she is as desperately anxious to prevent this as Manders, and she would have blurted out the truth, in spite of Manders' horror at such a method, had not the orphanage caught fire as she was about to speak. (Curtain Act II). Worse is to come, as the reader well remembers: Oswald's confession that his brain is softening and his demand that when idiocy comes his mother should put him out of his misery. Mme. Paxinou plays those dreadful moments with an intensity of emotion that makes tears run down her own cheeks, and with a *controlled* abandonment of gesture that shows the art of acting at its best. Mr. Carol as Oswald has to combine apathy and excitement—that is the secret of acting the part. It is extremely difficult, but he succeeds. The part of the hypocrite hobbling carpenter is played excellently by Mr. Rigby, but Engstrand is a "stage hypocrite," and not drawn with Ibsen's usual integrity of observation. He has exaggerated also in the last act the gullibility of Manders. Those are, I think, the only flaws in a tragedy of a noble woman; a victim for whom Fate, the past, with its dead and its dead rules of conduct, proves too strong. DESMOND MACCARTHY

THE PROPHECIES OF JACK LONDON

NOT long ago Messrs. Werner Laurie had the excellent idea of republishing Jack London's *The Iron Heel* (5s.). Jack London was a far more successful proletarian novelist than our near-communist young writers who are read mainly by University students and connoisseurs of realistic literature. In spite of the introduction by Anatole France, which is included in this edition, he wrote not for the critics but for the people of all nations, and he was read by uneducated people because he could tell an exciting story with immense gusto and no respect for the conventions of good literature. He also happened to be a passionate revolutionary Socialist when the I.W.W. was spreading fear and hope throughout America. But he never let his Socialism squeeze out the love-interest, and *The Iron Heel* is a unique mixture of Wild-West thriller and Marxian sociology, which must have had more influence than all the contributors to *New Verse* put together. By the conventional canons, it is worthless literature and crude sociology. But it has one advantage over its modern counterparts; it is the sort of book which the non-reader reads, which means that it is as genuine proletarian literature as *Merrie England*.

The Iron Heel, first published in 1907, tells the story of a self-educated American worker who woos and wins the daughter of a rich Californian professor and then leads the revolutionary Socialist movement to glorious defeat by the Fascist oligarchy. Ernest Everhard (surely a romanticised self-portrait) first confutes the academics, bishops and business men in argument and then, as the inevitable crisis of Capitalism develops, warns the working-classes of the impossibility of an early victory and is executed after an unsuccessful rising. The story is told by his wife, and breaks off quite suddenly at the moment of the workers' worst defeat. It is only through the annotations of an imaginary historian of the millennial future that we learn of the ultimate victory of World Socialism.

A profound pessimism is the most striking feature of *The Iron Heel*. Unlike William Morris and Blatchford, Jack London seems to have been filled with a melancholy certainty that Socialism could not come for at least three centuries, and would be preceded by the epoch of the Servile State, in which a new dynamic capitalism, led by men with a religious certainty of their mission, would seduce the skilled workers, suppress the proletarian revolution and rule by means of a paramilitary army of Scarlet Mercenaries. The material achievements of this new despotic capitalism would be immense, matched only by its "high ethical righteousness."

> Out of the ethical incoherency and inconsistency of capitalism, the Oligarchs emerged with a new ethic, coherent and definite, sharp and severe as steel, the most absurd and unscientific and at the same time the most potent possessed by any tyrant class. The Oligarchs believed their ethics, in spite of the fact that biology and evolution gave them the lie; and because of their faith, for three centuries they were able to hold back the mighty tide of human progress—a spectacle profound, tremendous, puzzling to the metaphysical moralist, and one that to the materialist is the cause of many doubts and reconsiderations. . . . There were no more idle-rich young men. Their strength was used to give united strength to the Oligarchy. . . . They went into the multitudinous divisions of the Government, took service in the colonial possessions and by tens of thousands went into the various secret services. In every function, they performed the important service of moulding the thought-processes of the nation in the direction of the perpetuity of the Oligarchy.

This is surely one of the most astounding prophecies in history. Jack London believed that when war came in 1913 a strike in Socialist Germany would stop it, and he was convinced that it was America which would go Fascist and claim the world as its *Lebensraum*. But these mistakes are trivial compared with the immense achievement of predicting the shape of things to come after Liberal capitalism was finished, and incidentally spotting that Japan would produce the most savage Fascist movement and try to capture "the whole Asiatic portion of the world market except India."

But even Jack London could not foresee the whole horror of our age. He assumed that war would be chiefly civil war and so argued that the main problem of his Oligarchs would be to split the working-classes by concessions to the Unions, and to provide employment for the masses and an outlet for surplus profits. So he pictures his Fascist State at peace with the world and throwing its whole energy into colossal public works.

> Magnificent roads will be built. There will be great achievements in science, and especially in art. When the Oligarchs have completely mastered the people, they will have time to spare for other things. Under their direction and generously rewarded will toil the artisans. The result will be great art; for no longer as up to yesterday will the artists pander to the bourgeois tastes of the middle-classes. It will be great art, I tell you, and wonder cities will arise. . .
>
> Thus will the surplus be constantly expended while labour does the work. The building of these great works will give a starvation ration to millions of common workers, for the enormous bulk of the surplus will compel an enormous expenditure. . . . These things will the Oligarchs do because they cannot help doing them . . . and beneath will be the Abyss, which will fester and rot and ever renew itself, the common people, the great bulk of the population.

There is Hitler's vision of Fascism, but not the reality. For even Jack London could not foresee that, instead of the great public works of peace the totalitarian rulers would spend their millions upon the instruments of war, or that the artists among them would be constantly thwarted by military exigencies from fulfilling their dreams. And yet, all that is needed for the complete fulfilment of his nightmare is the victory of Hitler with the connivance of Stalin. Then Berlin might become one of the cities which Ernest Everhard saw in his nightmare visions.

Stranger even than the accuracy of its prophecies is the fact that *The Iron Heel* enjoyed such an immense popularity among working-class thinkers. Contemptuous of the Trade Unions, hating the subservience of the common people, Jack London put his trust in the revolutionary violence of a tiny élite. Not for him the comforting faith of Reformist Democracy or the illusion that the proletariat was in itself a revolutionary power. The Socialist he conceived was a

member of a church as select and secret as that of the primitive Christians: like them, he lived in catacombs and holes in the ground or permeated the Oligarchy itself. Like them, he had no faith in unregenerate man, far less in a particular class, though he believed that the redeemers would come from among the poor and dispossessed. Probably it was this profound kinship between the faith of revolutionary Christianity and Jack London's myth of violence which made *The Iron Heel*, in spite of its pessimism, so popular among simple people, who still believe that it is only through the suffering of the elect that the Kingdom of Heaven can come.

It is impossible to pretend that *The Iron Heel* is either good literature or among the best of Jack London's stories. There is too much argument and the action consists too exclusively of murder and rapine, culminating in a description of the Chicago Commune, in which the corpses are piled so high that interest slackens. Re-reading it now, over thirty years after it was written, I was struck by its childish ecstasy in carnage and secret conspiracy. Jack London, like many working-class revolutionaries of all parties, experienced the existing misery and the fantasies of destruction so violently that he was content to leave all serious thought of "work, wealth and happiness" to his successors in a distant Millennium. He expressed not the will to power of a rising class but the escape into violence, whether real or imaginary, of those who could not conceive that they would be called to sit in the seats of the mighty. That is why he could never quite suppress his admiration for the Fascists, whose coming he prophesied with such apparent pessimism. They were the Spartan bosses of his dreams who would give the "helot" workers what they deserved. This philosophy is a far more genuine expression of proletarian self-consciousness than Marxism or Social Democracy; it is also one of the causes of Hitler's success. I wonder if *The Iron Heel* is banned in Germany.

R. H. S. CROSSMAN

PLAYS AND PICTURES

Return of the Vic-Wells Ballet to Sadler's Wells

No one who was present at the opening of the Vic-Wells Ballet's new season will easily forget the poignancy of their performance and the emotion of their rapturous reception. For they had recently shared with the Dutch the horrible ordeal of invasion, only narrowly escaping death; and had suffered the loss of all their stage properties and private possessions. We were also applauding the courage and presence of mind which it is common knowledge that the whole company showed. Wisely, *The Wise Virgins* had been left at home, and appeared in all its original beauty; but the orchestral score and parts of *Dante Sonata* were lost in the flight from Holland, and gramophone records took the place of the orchestra. They are extremely good, though with a strange ghostly quality which was enhanced by the light left burning above each music desk, rather as food is put out in certain parts of the world for the visiting spirits to eat. The faint breathing of the gramophone needle added to the ghostly illusion. But there was nothing faint about the dancing. The demoniac quality of *Dante Sonata* has never been so powerfully realised, Robert Helpman, in particular, dancing with a really inspired energy and beauty. Who that watched it could forget that burning beach across the Channel, which in these last days has laid the tragic sanction of reality on Frederick Ashton's passionate choregraphic fantasy?

"The Tempest," at the Old Vic

This is incomparably the most difficult to produce of all Shakespeare's plays. Indeed, it is not a play, but the most exquisite of Masques, interrupted by some clownery. One can imagine a satisfactory performance, but this would require the collaboration of the greatest living painters, musicians, choreographers and actors, with unlimited time for rehearsal and prodigal expenditure. Meanwhile, the Old Vic production demands a visit, for the sake of several striking performances. Mr. Gielgud conceives Prospero excellently as a Renaissance intellectual, majestic in a pair of spectacles. (An ignorant gentleman sitting next to us supposed this to be an anachronism.) It was a delight to hear the verse spoken with such musical intelligence, and Mr. Gielgud hardly once lapsed into the over-expressiveness that is his chief temptation. Especially imposing was his delivery of the aria in which Shakespeare took his own farewell of the theatre:

> Graves at my command
> Have waked their sleepers, oped, and let 'em forth
> By my so potent art. But this rough magic
> I here abjure.

Mr. Marius Goring, as Ariel, gave the best—because the most difficult—performance. His movements were most delicate, and the carriage of his head suggested wonderfully the native wildness of an impatient captive sprite. By sheer art he avoided the continuous peril of archness. (Why, oh why, did he not play the Fool in the recent *Lear?*) Also, he sang very charmingly. As Caliban Mr. Jack Hawkins was evidently effective, but his skilful make-up was a lapse of taste on somebody's part. Pithecanthropus was surely not Shakespeare's notion of Caliban. He cries in fear:

> We shall lose our time,
> And all be turned to barnacles, or to apes
> With foreheads villainous low.

But at the Old Vic this metamorphosis has already occurred, and the moon-calf looks like an illustration to a popular history of the Origin of Man. Mr. Alec Guinness, one of the best actors in England, was inevitably good as the tranced Ferdinand, and Miss Jessica Tandy looked as pretty as a steel-engraving in one of Lady Blessington's Books of Beauty. Mr. W. G. Fay brought his telling gestures to the part of Stephano, but the Abbey Theatre brogue was so thick that half the time he might have been talking Erse. Messrs. Marne Maitland, Andrew Cruickshank and Lewis Casson gave good support. Mr. Oliver Messel was clearly handicapped by the claims of economy, but in any case his gift, which would devise perfect settings for *The Way of the World*, *Rosenkavalier* or *La Traviata*, is inappropriate to *The Tempest*. He has given us a rocky landscape (Carpaccio-Bermann) with dead trees: instead of an earthly paradise, a Thebaid where castaways would immediately starve. The production would have gained enormously if the movements of all the actors had been stylised. We should like to see what Mr. Frederick Ashton could effect.

ALL ORDINARY
LEGAL & GENERAL
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"Years Without Days," at the Warner Theatre

"Squadron 992," G.P.O. Documentary, at the Regal and London Pavilion

Yet another film about prisons, and, in the current idiom, about a good prison (as prisons go), and a Governor with liberal notions. The film has been made primarily, one may suppose, to show off John Garfield's talent. He plays the part of a tough, cocky, young gangster who imagines that his reputation and connections will procure him "inside" the preferential treatment he got himself outside. The governor, quietly and effectively sketched by Pat O'Brien, soon disillusions him. This sort of stuff is jam to John Garfield and so pretty undistinguished. After a number of the customary prison incidents, the governor lets him out on parole to see his dying girl (Ann Sheridan) and during that episode a murder is pinned on him. After some natural hesitation he returns to give himself up, thus vindicating the governor's "modern methods." Sentimental, if you like, but at least sentimental about decent behaviour and that alone is refreshing. More, the story faces the consequences of its sentimentality and the gangster is executed for a murder he didn't commit; these final scenes have a moving accent of authenticity.

In the quiet months of the *Sitzkrieg* the balloon barrage appeared as a charming new decoration of the air-scape; and now it provides delightful cinematographic material, exactly

suited to Cavalcanti's lyric talent. The G.P.O. Unit was attached to a squadron sent up to the Firth of Forth after the first air-raid, and the expedition has produced an excellent documentary. The core of it is the solid, unshowy work of training and organising, and it is the great merit of the film to have made this as interesting to watch as it probably is to perform. But, as well, the film is highly decorative with its long convoys passing through Edinburgh at dawn, and, above all, of course, the balloons themselves—awkward, jumbling cow-like near the ground: impassively beautiful in their own element. Combined with the lines of the Forth Bridge they provide some lovely compositions. So much so that it all seems very unrelated to function. Even an air-raid is only a pattern in movement when Cavalcanti balances it with a greyhound chasing a hare. An exciting, charming picture worth going out of one's way to see.

THE COMING WEEK

SUNDAY, June 9th—
John Katz: "The Will to Victory," Conway Hall, 11.
MONDAY, June 10th—
M. Rytter: "How Norway Fell," 12 Gt. Newport Street, W.C.2., 7.45.
TUESDAY, June 11th—
Miss S. M. Hayes: "Food Restrictions and the Working-Class Budget," Housing Centre, 13 Suffolk Street, S.W.1, 1.
T. Corder Catchpool: "Christian Peace Making," Friends House, 1.20.
WEDNESDAY, June 12th—
Commandant Dumas: "Le Prince Aage de Danemark et la Légion Etrangère," Institut Français, 5.
A. Hughes: "World Affairs—the Far East and Europe," Dick Sheppard Centre, 8.

Correspondence

MAN THE RAMPARTS

SIR,—In your notes of the week of the last edition of your paper, you refer to the method employed by the International Brigades in Spain of strengthening their new recruits by the addition of veterans. This, you suggest, might well be tried in the British Army.

I should like to point out a few differences in the situation which must be considered. First, the International Brigades were officered by men of their own class, or by men whose known sympathies were with the working-class. The great majority of these officers had risen from the ranks in action, and were not appointed, as in the British Army, from members of the ruling or middle classes, without reference to their quality or their experience.

Secondly, no one was making profits from the materials supplied to the Spanish Army—no one, that is, of the country itself. The soldiers knew that no one of their leaders, political or military, stood to gain from the unnecessary prolongation of the war; no one was paid on the "costs plus" basis for Government contracts. However considerable may have been the effects of Franco's Fifth Column, the soldiers of the Spanish Army and of the International Brigades knew that the leaders of the country were not capitalists, and that therefore every effort was being made to supply arms for fighting and not for someone's profit.

Finally, we knew that in Spain a new life was being created around us—the life for which we were prepared to offer our lives. Education and Social Services were advancing at a rate that has been called miraculous. The land of Socialism was becoming a reality in the midst of war. Everything possible was done for the new generation, both for their welfare and for their safety.

In Britain now these things are not happening, and the soldiers know it. While the men are left to worry about their dependants and their homes, while they can still ask "Will we come home after this war to find the same old gang in power, as we did after the last war?", while they know that people are making profits from arms on both sides and don't care who dies as long as they can still sell arms, while their officers are of a different class from themselves, it is of little use making plans for stiffening the troops by an admixture of veterans.

The men of the International Brigades have declared many times that they cannot see in this war the aims for which we fought in Spain; we oppose this war as a method of making profits from the people. We shall continue to oppose this war, whatever the composition of the Government, while the class at present in power remains there.

International Brigade Association, 115 Shaftesbury Avenue, London, W.C.2. — ALAN W. GILCHRIST, Secretary for the British Battalion

[Several of our correspondent's points are sound, but so were similar criticisms of the Popular Front Government in Spain—not to mention Chiang Kai-Shek's Government in China. The answer for us, and we suggest for Mr. Gilchrist, is that we must use the present opportunity, now that Labour is in the Churchill Government, to effect the social changes which must be made during the war.—ED., *N.S. & N.*]

THE DEMOCRATIC REVOLUTION

SIR,—Many observers must have noticed how the rank and file of the Conservative Party now look to the Socialist and Progressive members of the Cabinet to extricate the country from the result of years of Tory mismanagement.

There is now in Britain a willingness, almost an anxiety, to accept Socialist policy in all fields of action, both at home and abroad, and a desire for practical Socialism in the questions of production and national wealth.

May I use your columns to point out to those leaders of Progressive thought that by using this feeling when harnessing our strength for this war on Nazidom and Fascism, they will be laying the foundations on which a just peace in a Socialist Europe can be erected.

Victory and Socialism can be synonymous.

G. B. CROMPTON

"NATIONAL SOCIALISM"

SIR,—Is it not a misnomer to describe as national "socialism" the morbid, savage and aggressive "nationalism" or "racialism" which, under stress of past national humiliation and sense of injustice (rightly or wrongly felt), has for the time being infected the German people? Socialism, I believe, is as incidental to "Hitlerism" as it is to the policy of our own Prime Minister, who last week took powers to establish in this country a complete socialist state. A nation at bay cannot to-day afford the expensive luxury of private muddle and drift. Some of us still hope that, when the devil now raging in Europe has been expelled, socialism, or public control of economic power, will come to stay, and bring with it the solid foundation of a new world order.

BARBARA DRAKE

15 Sheffield Terrace, W.8.

REFUGEES

SIR,—In spite of vigorous action by the Government, we are aware that propaganda directed against aliens, and particularly against refugees, persists and even increases.

All must support the Government in its action designed to preserve the country from spies or traitors. But this propaganda causes needless suffering to people who have already been through terrible hardships.

The vast majority of refugees, being themselves the victims of the Nazi tyranny, are as hostile to this regime as we are ourselves.

We appeal on their behalf to all citizens of good will to check this cruel and ill-informed propaganda, while supporting the action taken for the national safety by the responsible persons.

33 Upper Richmond Rd., S.W.15. — WILLIAM EBOR, Archbishop of York
LYTTON — M. I. CORBETT-ASHBY
RICHARD ACLAND — A. D. LINDSAY
F. G. KENYON — JOSIAH C. WEDGWOOD, P.C., M.P., D.S.O.
J. HOPE-SIMPSON

SIR,—I hope you will make some comment on Sir Neville Bland's anti-Fifth Column talk, given in the 6.0 o'clock news last Thursday, and quoted in the 9.0 o'clock news the same evening. Refusing to recognise, what even the Chamberlain Government recognised, namely the existence of *bona fide* refugees, and saying nothing of the activity of non-refugees and Dutch nationals in the conquest of Holland, he advised us to suspect anyone of German or Austrian connections. Such an exhortation must appal most of your readers in view of the suffering it is likely to cause to their innocent German or Austrian friends. But this is not the worst. Sir Neville's words are calculated to stimulate just that spy mania and panic atmosphere which more responsible speakers have been at pains to check. Why did the Ministry of Information allow such a talk to be given?

DUNCAN TAYLOR

"ArClar Guest House,"
Mount Ambrose, Redruth.

FRENCHMEN IN ENGLAND

SIR,—May I ask the hospitality of your columns to express the deepest regret that the National Defence Regulations now coming into force make no distinction between the French, twice-proved allies in our generation, and non-belligerents, neutrals or very recent allies?

They seem to order these things better in France. Quite recently, in a French broadcast relating to restrictions on aliens in military areas, it was stated that, even within such areas, the British were to have the same status as the French.

But for the purposes of our regulations French men and women, most of whom have relatives fighting in the Allied forces, are simply classed as "aliens" and, without a word of apology or regret (broadcast or otherwise) subjected to the same restrictions as any other non-enemy foreigners.

Everyone realises, of course, that amongst those holding French passports there may be some suspicious characters and that therefore the *bona fides* of French nationals need to be carefully examined—the French would be the first to recognise this themselves—but surely they should have been placed in a special category, assured that their cases would be quickly examined and that, where there was no cause for suspicion, the fullest exemption would be given.

K. T. BUTLER

Girton College,
Cambridge.

A DAY OF PRAYER

SIR,—I am sure all your readers thoroughly enjoyed, as much as you so evidently did yourself, the witty remark you report of the taxi-driver, who, on hearing of the Belgian surrender, observed that that was what came of a day of national prayer.

Curiously enough, another event that has followed that day of prayer has been the successful evacuation of the bulk of the Allied forces from Flanders, though, after the 9 o'clock broadcast on May 29th, some of us at least had almost lost hope.

Naturally I should not venture to suggest to you for even one moment that there is anything here but the most complete and utterly unrelated coincidence. I can hear the delighted chuckle of all your sophisticated readers at the mere idea of there being the remotest connection between our prayers and the safety of our men. A quaint and not uninteresting survival of superstition, your readers will smilingly say, even though prayer and rescue do stand to each other in a certain time relationship.

23 Nimrod Road, Streatham Park, London, S.W.16 — E. R. PUNSHON

[Reference is made to this letter in the London Diary this week.—ED., *N.S. & N.*]

EVACUATION

SIR,—Mr. Malcolm MacDonald, far from having "misread the mood of the public," has read it with great accuracy.

As a social worker engaged on this problem in the L.C.C. area I am struck, and surprised, by the very definite and increasing feeling against evacuation. In September, 1938, there was an excellent response amounting in my area to about 90 per cent. In September, 1939, the numbers had much decreased, though they were still considerable. To-day the official figure of those registered is 11 per cent. of those eligible.

Schools have been kept open for registration at the week-ends with the most meagre results. At the school at which I was a registrar one woman presented herself during the whole of Saturday and Sunday, and I believe this was typical. Rightly or wrongly, working-class opinion is against evacuation.

G. R. EVANS

58 West End Lane, N.W.6.

[This letter suggests the need of an immediate campaign by local leaders to explain the facts to that part of the public which still does not realise the imminence of the danger.—ED., *N.S. & N.*]

Current Literature

THE HUMANE ART

Horace Walpole. By R. W. KETTON-CREMER. *Duckworth.* 16s.

If at this moment there is little chance of re-reading the sixteen volumes of the Paget Toynbee edition of Walpole's letters, while the prospect of possessing the magnificent Yale edition where all the letters are to be printed with all the answers, becomes remote, this sound and sober biography of Horace Walpole by Mr. Ketton-Cremer may serve at least to inspire some random thoughts about Walpole and the humane art which owes its origin to the love of friends.

But, according to his latest biographer, Horace Walpole's letters were inspired not by the love of friends but by the love of posterity. He had meant to write the history of his own times. After twenty pages he gave it up, and decided to write another kind of history—a history ostensibly inspired by friends but in fact written for posterity. Thus Mann stood for politics; Gray for literature; Montagu and Lady Ossory for society. They were pegs, not friends, each chosen because he was "particularly connected . . . with one of the subjects about which he wished to enlighten and inform posterity." But if we believe that Horace Walpole was a historian in disguise, we are denying his peculiar genius as a letter writer. The letter writer is no surreptitious historian. He is a man of short range sensibility; he speaks not to the public at large but to the individual in private. All good letter writers feel the drag of the face on the other side of the page and obey it—they take as much as they give. And Horace Walpole was no exception. There is the correspondence with Cole to prove it. We can see, in Mr. Lewis's edition, how the Tory parson develops the radical and the free-thinker in Walpole, how the middle-class professional man brings to the surface the aristocrat and the amateur. If Cole had been nothing but a peg there would have been none of this echo, none of this mingling of voices. It is true that Walpole had an attitude and a style, and that his letters have a fine hard glaze upon them that preserves them, like the teeth of which he was so proud, from the little dents and rubs of familiarity. And of course—did he not insist that his letters must be kept?—he sometimes looked over his page at the distant horizon, as Madame de Sévigné, whom he worshipped, did too, and imagined other people in times to come reading him. But that he allowed the featureless face of posterity to stand between him and the very voice and dress of his friends, how they looked and how they thought, the letters themselves with their perpetual variety deny. Open them at random. He is writing about politics—about Wilkes and Chatham and the signs of coming revolution in France; but also about a snuff box; and a red riband; and about two very small black dogs. Voices upon the stairs interrupt him; more sightseers have come to see Caligula with his silver eyes; a spark from the fire has burnt the page he was writing; he cannot keep the pompous style any longer, nor mend a careless phrase, and so, flexible as an eel, he winds from high politics to living faces and the past and its memories—"I tell you we should get together, and comfort ourselves with the brave days that we have known. . . . I wished for you; the same scenes strike us both, and the same kind of visions has amused us both ever since we were born." It is not thus that a man writes when his correspondent is a peg and he is thinking of posterity.

Nor again was he thinking of the great public, which, in a very few years, would have paid him handsomely for the brilliant pages that he lavished upon his friends. Was it, then, the growth of writing as a paid profession, and the change which that change of focus brought with it that led, in the nineteenth century, to the decline of this humane art? Friendship flourished, nor was there any lack of gift. Who could have described a party more brilliantly than Macaulay or a landscape more exquisitely than Tennyson? But there, looking them full in the face was the present moment—the great gluttonous public; and how can a writer turn at will from that impersonal stare to the little circle in the fire-lit room? Macaulay, writing to his sister, can no more drop his public manner than an actress can scrub her cheeks clean of paint and take her place naturally at the tea-table. And Tennyson with his fear of publicity—"While I live the owls, when I die the ghouls"—left nothing more succulent for the ghoul to feed upon than a handful of dry little notes that anybody could read, or print or put under glass in a museum. News and gossip, the sticks and straws out of which the old letter writer made his nest have been snatched away. The wireless and the telephone have intervened. The letter writer has nothing now to build with except what is most private; and how monotonous after a page or two the intensity of the very private becomes! We long that Keats even should cease to talk about Fanny, and that Elizabeth and Robert Browning should slam the door of the sick room and take a breath of fresh air in an omnibus. Instead of letters posterity will have confessions, diaries, note-books, like M. Gide's—hybrid books in which the writer talks in the dark to himself about himself for a generation yet to be born.

Horace Walpole suffered none of these drawbacks. If he was the greatest of English letter writers it was not only thanks to his gifts but to his immense good fortune. He had his places to begin with—an income of £2,500 dropped yearly into his mouth from Collectorships and Usherships and was swallowed without a pang. ". . . nor can I think myself," he wrote serenely, "as a placeman a more useless or a less legal engrosser of part of the wealth of the nation than deans and prebendaries"—indeed the money was well invested. But besides those places, there was the other—his place in the very centre of the audience, facing the stage. There he could sit and see without being seen; contemplate without being called upon to act. Above all he was blessed in his little public—a circle that surrounded him with that warm climate in which he could live the life of incessant changes which is the breath of a letter writer's existence. Besides the wit and the anecdote and the brilliant descriptions of masquerades and midnight revelries his friends drew from him something superficial yet profound, something changing yet entire—himself shall we call it in default of one word for that which friends elicit but the great public kills? From that sprang his immortality. For a self that goes on changing is a self that goes on living. As a historian he would have stagnated among historians. But as a letter writer he buffets his way among the crowd, holding out a hand to each generation in turn—laughed at, criticised, despised, admired, but always in touch with the living. When Macaulay met him in October, 1833, he struck that hand away in a burst of righteous indignation. "His mind was a bundle of inconstant whims and affectations. His features were covered by mask within mask." His letters, like *pâté de foie gras*, owed their excellence "to the diseases of the wretched animal which furnishes it"—such was Macaulay's greeting. And what greater boon can any writer ask than to be trounced by Lord Macaulay? We take the reputation he has gored, repair it and give it another spin and another direction—another lease of life. Opinion, as Mr. Ketton-Cremer says, is always changing about Walpole. "The present age looks upon him with a more friendly eye" than the last. Is it that the present age is deafened with boom and blatancy? Does it hear in Walpole's low tones, things that are more interesting, more penetrating, more true than can be said by the loud speakers? Certainly there is something wonderful to the present age in the sight of a whole human being—of a man so blessed that he could unfold every gift, every foible, whose long life spreads like a great lake reflecting houses and friends and wars and snuff boxes and revolutions and lap dogs, the great and the little, all intermingled, and behind them a stretch of the serene blue sky. "Nor will [death] I think see me very unwilling to go with him, though I have no disappointments, but I came into the world so early, and have seen so much that I am satisfied." Satisfied with his life in the flesh, he could be still more satisfied with his life in the spirit. Even now he is being collected and pieced together, letter and answer, himself and the reflections of himself, so that whoever else may die, Horace Walpole is immortal. Whatever ruin may befall the map of Europe in years to come, there will still be people, it is consoling to reflect, to hang absorbed over the map of one human face. VIRGINIA WOOLF

NEW NOVELS

Watch Below. By WILLIAM MCFEE. *Faber.* 9s. 6d.

Royal Highness. By THOMAS MANN. *Secker and Warburg.* 8s. 6d.

Kind Are Her Answers. By MARY RENAULT. *Longmans.* 8s. 6d.

Eggs, Beans and Crumpets. By P. G. WODEHOUSE. *H. Jenkins.* 7s. 6d.

To most readers the name William McFee will suggest the phrase *a second Conrad*, a phrase which Mr. McFee himself has possibly had in mind from time to time. But in *Watch Below* the opalescent Polish sea mist has rolled back and Mr. McFee is once again simply and agreeably himself. Freed from Conrad's conception of The Novel he has reared up a somewhat unwieldy structure which falls into three awkwardly related parts, but the charm of the writing and the material outweighs the unfamiliar pattern of the book. The first part is an essay about Marine Poetry which changes course in mid flight and ends with a discussion of The Future of Merchant Shipping, a section of the book unlikely to please many readers. The second is a delightful reminiscence in the first person singular of the shipping world the author knew as a boy in 1887, delightful in its clarity and objectiveness. And from that one passes on to a story of the first voyages of a ship's engineer in a tramp steamer just before the first German war. The descriptive writing has an agreeable quality which suggests Early English Water-colour painting by its mood of tranquillity, one thinks of Rowlandson pictures, of gardens which are not only pretty but also show that the gardeners have worked hard. Here there is all the superficial charm of boats of every kind, mounds of produce on wharves, the sun on the sea, and so on with an appreciation of the skill of shipbuilding and of the work in the routine of taking a ship from port to port. The book's limpidity and tranquillity immediately give one the impression of escape from the disorder which crowds in on one from the news, but thinking about it one sees that this is not escape literature. The book sets out to draw the picture of a profession and the basis is that, although the work could be done better, the business of carrying merchandise about the world is well worth doing and, in spite of discomforts and discontents, satisfying. The theme is the same as that of Jean Giono's recently published *Harvest*, of the virtue of creative activity and of the virtue in people whose lives are useful: the values also are the same, with a particular

THE MENACE

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WILLIAM McFEE. "A jewel of a novel—beyond praise."—*Times Lit. Sup.* "A draught of delight."—FRANK SWINNERTON, *Observer.* "An artistry that ought, if this were a just world, to make him a 'best-seller' with all the readers who really count. One knows of no living writer, save perhaps Mr. C. S. Forester, who so plainly has the root of the matter in him."—*Birmingham Post.* 9s. 6d.

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FORREST REID. "He is one of those writers who charms you whatever he says . . . you will not have turned many pages before the charm is on you."—BASIL DE SELINCOURT, *Observer.* "A work of literary beauty, of experience, mainly spiritual, simple musical prose. There is a chapter about dogs and cats that should make every animal lover Mr. Reid's friend; another about hauntings that have come his way."—*Daily Telegraph.* 10s. 6d.

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PAT MULLEN. "A life story unlike any other that has come my way . . . a writer of extraordinary power."—*Daily Telegraph.* "An exciting book."—*Sunday Times.* The autobiography of Pat Mullen, famous for his book *Man of Aran* and the film of that name. 10s. 6d.

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BERNARD LEACH. "It is doubtful whether any other visitor from the West ever shared our life so completely. Lafcadio Hearn was certainly one of those rare souls but what he knew was the old Japan, whereas what Leach touched was the new Japan."—Soyetsu Yanagi, Director of the National Folk Museum, Tokyo. This indicates this book's special appeal to all interested in the cultural relationships of East and West. As the first treatise by a potter in the workshop traditions handed down from the greatest period of Chinese ceramics, and as a record of the work of one of the leading English potters it is, of course, a *must* book for anyone interested in the making or collecting of pottery or in art and æsthetics.—*With* 162 *illustrations.* 21s.

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FABER

emphasis on the point that success is a matter of this satisfaction in work well done and not a matter of material reward. Mr. McFee is plain about these things, and, as a ship is a microcosm of the State he is able to carry his ideas rather further than Giono who left them as problems of individual conduct. Talking about the Forecastle hands, and the parasites who live off the ship and stay on shore, he touches on the problem of those who want to give as little as possible or to take more than their share. Behind its placid façade this book discusses the things with which men must buy their freedom and their rights, but in an idle hour the pleasant façade is delightful enough.

A cinema organ playing "Kitten On the Keys" with vibrating and shuddering playfulness is the image brought to mind by *Royal Highness*, in which Thomas Mann brings his somewhat fruity gifts to bear on the script of a light operetta of sufficient banality. It would be fairer to say *brought*, for the book was written in 1905 when the Hohenzollerns breathed reality into the Ruritanian clay and justified the absurdities. Those boat-like carriages hung by magic between the web-like wheels, the feathered hats, ribboned chests, the Royal water-colours, the court world, had a tinsel quality that demanded fairy stories. And in 1905 it was not clear what the witches had added to the gifts, or what inconceivable malice and disaster was being hatched under the feathers, so that this story founded on the court of the German Emperor could have a plausible happy ending. This slight fantasy first appeared as a translation in 1916 when the ugly reality was breaking in on it in a crashing way, and here it is again. This time there is by way of introduction a critical note by the author relating it, in a lapidary, posthumous way, to the body of his work; it constitutes a literary curiosity which may suggest to many readers that a revaluation of his serious work is perhaps overdue and that he should at last be hailed, with a disregard of superficiality, as the Charles Morgan of Germany.

The writer of *Kind Are Her Answers* is possessed of unusual gifts and the book is extraordinarily vivid and complete in its detail. But as one reads on, enjoying the skilful description of a neglected Victorian garden, the swift creation of an appalling nit-wit girl, and a Quisling Group House-party drawn with deft malice, one comes up against a complete emptiness. The prattle is about nothing at all but the bedding of an unhappily married Doctor and his love. As a story of the love life of a man with a gift for netting himself with women temperamentally bound to irritate and ultimately bore him, it is all very well, but the world is full of a number of things and the affairs of people stupid enough to break the marriage contract because they are bored seem extremely trivial. Perhaps the historic moment leads one to feel so strongly that this book was a waste of great talents. The Ivory Tower is a nice idea and one has a pretty picture of the artist inside, polishing, perfecting, and concentrating on lovely things, but one forgets the result of having nothing but Ivory to work on. It is rather filthy material, with a dingy colour and a soapy surface, which artists have left to the carvers of napkin rings and chessmen for the best of reasons. A book as completely divorced from everyday world as *Kind Are Her Answers* warns one of the consequences of using that soft and deadly material.

Eggs, Beans and Crumpets is not the master's best work; like the wine from a good yard in a bad year, it is undoubtedly the right stuff but it is not quite the right quality. The Wodehouse public is probably split on the Ukridge question, between those who consider him as an inspired creation and those who see him as red sky at morning—the certain sign of an off day. Be that as it may, there are three Ukridge stories in this volume, one indifferent Mulliner, and four Bingo Littles which are very fair. If it were a painting it would ultimately come to rest in some provincial gallery catalogued as School of Wodehouse or, at best, Doubtful.

ANTHONY WEST

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GERMANOPHOBIA

Germany the Aggressor. By F. J. C. HEARNSHAW. *Chambers.* 7s. 6d.

The Canker of Germany. By E. G. PREUSS. *Williams and Norgate.* 7s. 6d.

A Lasting Peace. By MAXWELL GARNETT and H. F. KOEPPLER. *Allen and Unwin.* 7s. 6d.

1848. By VEIT VALENTIN. *Allen and Unwin.* 12s. 6d.

In the first weeks of the war a statistical inquiry showed that over 90 per cent. of the British people considered that they were waging war not on the German people but on Hitlerism. Such a result was only possible because, although we had declared war, we had not begun to wage it. But now once again the war mentality is gaining ground, and academic veterans like Professor Hearnshaw are ready in the same breath to condemn Herr Hitler's racialism and to assert that "Germany" has been the aggressor throughout the ages. Poor Germany, blamed even for not talking French:

> Cut off from the community of the Latin peoples by its harsh and barbaric language, it has failed to keep in touch with the culture of the modern world.

and for the geographical position of its capital:

> Berlin, a city situated among *typical Slavonic swamps*, on a river that looks like a foul and sluggish canal.

Under Professor Hearnshaw's touch even those lovely woods and lakes round Berlin are racialised into "Slavonic swamps" and become the sure mark of an aggressor. Dr. Goebbels could do no better with "London, whose tortuous Thames expresses the commercial spirit of a Jewish plutocracy." Professor Hearnshaw is a competent historian, and cannot overlook the fact that Von Stein was a Liberal. But because he can only think in terms of personified nations he expresses this in the following way:

> The Prussia which played so prominent a part in the War of Liberation (1813–15) was a very different Prussia from that which had been overthrown at Jena. . . . She had undergone a purification and regeneration that endured for half a century.

It never occurs to him that "Prussia" may not be a neat homogeneous unity but consist of warring elements. In his view it must at any moment be *either* good *or* bad, from which it follows that "Britain" from 1930 to 1940 was as weak, hypocritical and evasive as the National Government, and has now suddenly assumed the courage and vigour of Mr. Churchill.

Mr. Preuss, son of the creator of the Weimar Constitution, is the victim of another variant of the same phobia. He asserts that the German people suffer from "partial insanity" and cannot think politically like the English. He himself however (and his father) are exceptions to this rule. Oddly enough he combines this wholesale condemnation with the view that "the greatest damage to the adolescent State of the German people was done to it by the great democracies" in the harsh terms of the Armistice and Peace Treaties, and that all that the German people need is "to be given their chance." If "partial insanity" really is the canker of Germany, I do not see how this would have helped. Fortunately Mr. Preuss writes far better when he moves from the universal to the particular. His valuation of the working-class movement is sober and he places the responsibility for the Nazi revolution fairly and squarely on the shoulders of the German conservatives, both the Junkers and big business. Here is an interesting anecdote:

> I remember a meeting of the Berlin Chamber of Commerce in February, 1933, shortly after Hitler's appointment as Chancellor, in which, under the leadership of the chairman and president, Fritz von Mendelssohn, a contribution of 3½ million marks was voted by the chamber to the Hitler-Papen election fund.

There *is* a canker in Germany, but on Mr. Preuss' own evidence it is not in the people, but in certain social classes. And significantly enough this moral corruption was to be found in the analogous classes in France and Britain. The "Revolution of destruction" is not a purely German phenomenon but has been caused by the inner decay of a class throughout Europe. Every Papen has his Bonnet, every Meissner his Horace Wilson, every Brüning his Chamberlain.

It is a relief to turn from the simple-minded explanations of Mr. Preuss and Professor Hearnshaw to the serious study of the problem in Dr. Koeppler's contribution to "A Lasting Peace." In the first half of the book Dr. Maxwell Garnett seeks to develop the ideology of the *League of Nations Union* into the basis of a peace settlement. He fails because he clings to two illusions: first that the State consists of a government *plus* a "public opinion" and second that "it should be no part of our peace aims to interfere with Germany's internal political institutions so long as her internal government does not pursue an external policy injurious to her neighbours." Thus he, too, treats "Germany" as a single national entity with a single national will. Dr. Koeppler boldly challenges this thesis. Denouncing the view that "national wills" can be diseased, he reminds us that British liberty is "due to the constant change in the composition of the governing class" and traces the historical process by which Junkerdom succeeded in checking the growth of German democracy, aided and abetted by British

Company Meeting

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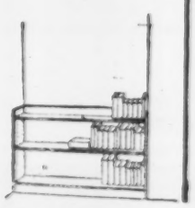

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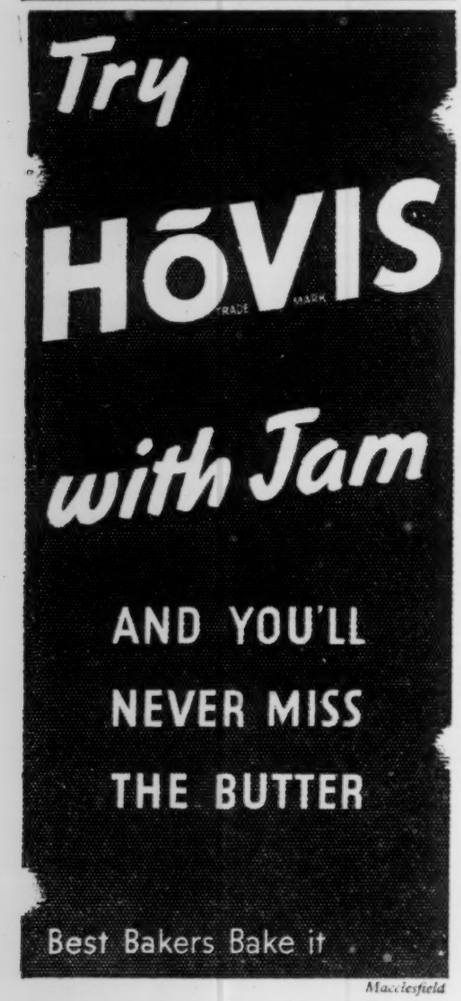

Macclesfield

and French governments. If the struggle between Parliament and Bismark in 1862 had ended differently, no one would be accusing the German people of partial insanity, and Dr. Koeppler rightly claims that the issue of that struggle was no more inevitable than that of the 1918 revolution. In both cases democracy just failed to overthrow an absolutist ruling class. Dr. Koeppler's conclusions are interesting. If the Nazis are overthrown, there will be a danger of a Junker restoration because they alone will have survived as a working unit. By enforcing the break-up of the East Elbian estates, the socialisation of industry and the creation of a people's army, the Allies could avert this danger and create the social basis in Germany for a durable peace. He does not add we must perform similar operations nearer home!

The soundness of Dr. Koeppler's analysis is emphasised by Dr. Valentin's study of the 1848 revolution. Here, in spite of a Teutonic translation and an irritating lack of arrangement, is a fascinating picture of Germany in all its variety and contradictions. Dr. Valentin does not believe in generalisations: he plunges us into a jungle of detail almost as complex as pre-Bismark Germany. Through his eyes we see the life of the free cities, of the small principalities of Prussia, Bavaria and the Southern States, and learn to know the personalities who composed the German democratic movement. Instead of the usual picture of dull lawyers and professors debating at Frankfurt, we discover the *Sturm und Drang* of a great revolutionary movement which failed not through political inefficiency but by sheer misfortune. As he wisely remarks of a later period:

> It was the true master-stroke of the Counter-Revolution to implant in the German people a belief in its own inefficiency.

and that applies to foreign Germanophobes as well.

R. H. S. CROSSMAN

RELIGION AND POETRY

The Oxford Book of Christian Verse. Chosen and Edited by LORD DAVID CECIL. *Oxford Press.* 8*s.* 6*d.*

The editor of this anthology is known to have a very sensitive taste, and it is no surprise that he has been rigorous in excluding the bad poetry in which sincerely devout men have so bountifully indulged. But Lord David Cecil deserves particular congratulations upon excluding so much good poetry. A less resolutely scrupulous editor would have gone to the highways and hedges, where our greatest poets sing, and compelled them to come in. For there has never been a great poet without feelings that could be called religious; the fugacity of human life, the regularity of the universe, the unending internecine fight between good and evil—these are the common themes alike of Christian and non-Christian poets. And it would have been easy to drag in pantheists and atheists to swell, misleadingly, the white-robed throng. Lord David indeed goes so far as to include one sonnet by Shakespeare, "Poor soul, the centre of my sinful earth." The last line has a Donne-ish air, "And Death once dead, there's no more dying then," and I suppose the poem just scrapes its way in, though Shakespeare's poetry, I fear, is conspicuously unchristian. Wordsworth is represented by the King's College Chapel Sonnet, not specifically Christian, and *Devotional Incitements*. (His Orthodox verses are usually flat.) Keats and Shelley are very properly omitted. Lord David seeks to explain why religious emotion, "the most sublime known to man," has not proved more fertile in poetry. "Poetry should be a spontaneous expression of the spirit; the poet lets his personality burst forth without concealment." But the devout person

> will allow himself to express only unexceptionable sentiments, love, reverence, humility: will voice no aspiration save for a purer soul and stronger faith. . . . The writer does not say what he really feels, but what he thinks he ought to feel: and he speaks not in his own voice but in the solemn tones that seem fitting to the solemn subject.

This is true enough, and goes to explain why Wordsworth and Coleridge wrote little good religious poetry. Lord David has some trenchant comments on Milton, who, he says, "was not essentially a religious poet":

> He was a philosopher rather than a devotee. His imagination was lucid and concrete, unlit by heavenly gleams . . . Nor was his moral sensibility a Christian one. The Stoic virtues, fortitude, temperance, above all, moral independence, were what he valued. He did not live by faith, scorned hope, and was indisposed to charity; while pride, so far from being the vice which Christianity considers it, was to Milton the mark of a superior nature.

After all, the simplest explanation of the comparative infrequency of Christian poetry is that the majority of the best poets have not been Christians. But the reader of this anthology may be struck by a further possibility, which Lord David has preferred to neglect. Protestantism, one begins to suspect, is intrinsically unpoetical.

The mediaeval poetry in the *Oxford Book* is touchingly beautiful, depending usually on the innocence with which it dramatises a Christian legend. Then comes the great outburst of devout poetry from Donne to Traherne, the work of writers born between 1570 and 1640. These men were either Catholic or Catholic-minded. Of the eighteenth century poets, Blake alone rises to mystical heights, and though he, it is true, was not a Catholic, neither was he a Lutheran or Calvinist. The Protestant verses of the period are rhetorical or wishy-washy. Addison, Watts, Young, Wesley, Toplady, Newton, and even Cowper, deeply though they may feel, are inarticulate compared with their predecessors:

> Where is the blessedness I knew
> When first I saw the LORD?
> Where is the soul-refreshing view,
> Of JESUS and His word?

Where indeed? And when we come to the nineteenth century, the three signal poets of Christianity are Christina Rossetti, Patmore and Hopkins, two of them Catholics and one Anglo-Catholic. (Lord David presses Browning upon us as the fourth great Christian poet of the time, giving us *Saul*, which I cannot see as Christian, and *A Death in the Desert*, which is chiefly dramatic. On similar evidence one could prove Browning a devotee of Olympus. A part of *Christmas Eve* would have been more plausible.) The Catholic monopoly continues with Francis Thompson, and to-day what Christian poet can we admire except the Anglo-Catholic Eliot? I conclude that Protestantism has contributed very little to Christian poetry, and indeed that it may fundamentally be as unpropitious to poetry as it is to sculpture and painting.

Presumably distrust of the senses is chiefly responsible. Whereas the Catholic accepts all the beauties of sight and sound and scent as manifestations of Deity, to be interpreted sacramentally, the Protestant regards these as seductive impediments to the direct vision of the Almighty. He lacks, moreover, the encouragement of a magnificent mythology. Milton can make music from the names of Angels and Archangels—but only the Catholic feels that he has an angel as his perpetual and personal attendant; only the Catholic talks familiarly with Saints whom he treats as his attentive friends; only the Catholic, in fine, is occupied with the picturesque apparatus of an unseen world. Even the Protestant doctrine of Grace is hostile to poetry. If all our righteousness is filthy rags, so is the visible world, and all our delight in it. Poetry is a sensuous art,

and the main material of poetry is forbidden to the Puritan.

But Catholic piety has a variety of moods and methods. To illustrate this, let me quote from the *Oxford Book*. Here is a stanza from *Come to your Heaven, you Heavenly Choirs!* a Christmas poem by Robert Southwell (1561–1595):

His chilling cold doth heat require,
Come, seraphins, in lieu of fire;
This little ark no cover hath,
Let cherubs' wings his body swathe;
Come, Raphael, this Babe must eat,
Provide our little Toby meat.

And now a poem by Sir Edward Sherburne (1618–1702):

And she washed his Feet with her Teares, and wiped them with the Hairs of her Head.

The proud Aegyptian Queen, her Roman Guest,
(T'express her love in Height of State, and Pleasure)
With Pearl dissolv'd in Gold, did feast,
Both Food and Treasure.

And now (dear Lord!) thy Lover, on the fair
And silver Tables of thy Feet, behold!
Pearl in her Tears, and in her Hair,
Offers thee Gold.

The first of these poems, written by a Jesuit martyr, has the touching freshness of a Quattrocento painting. The second, also by a Papist, is a sumptuous example of Counter-Reformation art—the verse equivalent of a Rubens. It is indeed a translation from the baroque Neapolitan poet, Marini, and to a Cisalpine taste may seem more decorative than devotional. I should like to quote Heywood's *Search for God*, Quarles' *On the Infancy of Our Saviour*, Herbert's *The Pulley*, or that charming anonymous poem *The Guest* (thought by Bullen, its discoverer, to be Vaughan's). These all show how English poets retained the innocency and directness of their mediaeval predecessors.

In Abr'ham's tent the winged guests
(O how familiar then was heaven!)
Eat, drink, discourse, sit down, and rest
Until the cool and shady even.

Despite these envious lines by Vaughan, his contemporaries often rose into this familiarity, a familiarity unparalleled, so far as I know, in post-Reformation poetry on the Continent. (The Spanish mystics are altogether different.) Here is one more example, which will be a novelty to most readers—lines from the hymn, *Crucifixus pro nobis*, by Patrick Cary, a brother of the Civil War Lord Falkland, and a Papist, where poems were first edited by Walter Scott:

His pretty feet and hands
(Of late more pure and white
Than is the snow
That pains them so).
Have lost their candour quite.
His lips are blue
(Where roses grew)
He's frozen everywhere:
All th' heat he has
Joseph, alas,
Gives in a groan; or Mary in a tear.

But this anthology is packed with felicities—I wonder how many readers could place these couplets?

Beneath the dews where unfletched tempests lie,
And infant winds their tender voices try,
Beneath the mighty ocean's wealthy caves,
Beneath th' eternal fountain of all waves,
Where their vast court the mother-waters keep,
And undisturbed by moons in silence sleep. . . .

They have been excavated by the editor from Cowley's *Davideis*.

The anthology contains nothing by Bishop King, whose *Exequy* is one of the loveliest Christian poems. I wish that Lord David had included a few notes, and modernised the spelling less drastically—the *Oxford Book of Seventeenth Century Verse* in this respect seems to me a happy compromise. But the book aims, I expect, rather at converting Christians to poetry than at converting poetry-lovers to Christianity. I am not qualified to judge the editor's erudition, but I may venture to applaud gratefully the sureness of his taste.

RAYMOND MORTIMER

WEATHER FORECAST

Weather Prediction. By MAJOR R. M. LESTER. *Hutchinson.* 10*s.* 6*d.*

The Weather Eye. By C. R. BENSTEAD. *Robert Hale.* 8*s.* 6*d.*

If any one imagines he will learn how to predict the English weather from either of these books, he is greatly mistaken. All he will learn is how our scientifically equipped meteorologists *do* predict the weather—a very different matter, as some of them are honest enough to admit. The meteorologists have invented a rich vocabulary. Such words as *alto-cumulus castellatus*, *cirro-nebula*, *nimbo-stratus*, *troposphere*, *geostrophic*, *katabatic*, *isallobaric*, enable them to invest their weather problems with all the ponderous mystery of a medical diagnosis, but bring the solution no nearer.

The ordinary man only wants to know what the weather will be like over his own head during the next 24 hours. The best the scientists can do is to indicate the weather probabilities over a wide area; and in England the weather is only the same over a wide area in the case of a zone of widespread rain or a stationary anticyclone—comparatively rare occurrences. All general forecasts, therefore, must be qualified by local conditions; and we can judge the diversity of local conditions by the proverbs about the weather they have engendered, which are as contradictory as they are emphatic. The general forecasts, on the other hand, are purposely framed in an ambiguous style to allow the maximum margin of error to the forecaster, so Mr. Benstead declares from his experience of the weather pundits. Until, therefore, each individual has trained himself to be "an experienced observer" of his local conditions, and has access to all the data that pour into the Air Ministry every few hours, and until the scientists themselves have learnt what a "surge in the troposphere" implies, we shall remain as ignorant as our forefathers when to take out our umbrellas.

Major Lester's book contains all the instructions necessary to become "an experienced observer," together with a description of the latest attempts to divine a surge in the troposphere by means of small hydrogen balloons that soar up to a height of 20 miles or so, reporting automatically by wireless as they rise the condition of the stratosphere, until they finally burst. Scattered through the book is to be found much peculiar weather lore, such as the existence or a 3.1 year recurrence of rainfall at Oxford and a 5.1 year recurrence of cold winds at Southport, the fact that August Bank Holiday is timed to coincide with one of the wettest weeks in the year, the effect of sunspots on the level of Lake Victoria in Africa, and the reliable way in which swallows anticipate cold weather by early migration. Major Lester most surprisingly omits from his budget of information any account of the Bjerknes method of "frontal analysis," which has been employed for the last 20 years in this country in weather-forecasting with some success. The isobars on weather-maps used to be marked around depressions as continuous smooth curves. Since Professor Bjerknes of Bergen discovered the existence of "warm fronts" and "cold fronts" during the last war, the isobars are now marked with kinks to show the assumed position of these two fronts. But although the assumption of "rain spreading from the West" is always based at the Air Ministry on this frontal analysis,

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"Under modern conditions," doctors say, "the human body is rather like a battery. It gets 'run-down' in winter and is 'recharged' by summer sunshine and air, ready for the winter to come. But last winter took more out of us than usual; next winter may prove harder still. Because the natural balance has become upset, we shall all need more 'charging' than usual this summer. And, with wartime restrictions, it rather looks as if we are going to get less—unless we can adjust the balance with a suitable tonic. Luckily medical science to-day can tell us *exactly* what that tonic should be—organic phosphorus and protein."

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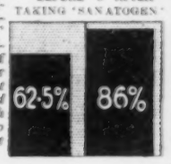

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By tradition as well as by deliberate policy, the Westminster Bank has always aimed at fostering the 'small' account. Moreover, there is no sharper line of demarcation between 'big' and 'small' than between 'white' and 'black'; there are many greys between, and it has always been good business for the Bank to encourage the smaller account, with confidence in its growth later on.

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the fronts are never referred to in public. I used to think the reason was cussed conservatism, but Major Lester's reticence on this one major development in recent meteorology suggests that the subject is tabu with the rain-making medicine-men.

Mr. Benstead, not being a Fellow of the Royal Meteorological Society like Major Lester, makes bold to explain the Bjerknes theory, but his ribald cynical style is severe on its intractability for specific prognostication without doing full justice to its complete success as a working hypothesis. When a surge in the troposphere lifts the two fronts they become occluded and the rain that is expected to fall from them remains up aloft, to the merriment of Mr. Benstead and the despair of the Air Ministry and the farmers. The rest of *The Weather Eye* is devoted to a comic dissertation on the inconsistencies of the weather prophets and the vagaries of the weather. He instances a nasty case of katabatic wind near Rickmansworth, where a tall railway viaduct was built across a valley. The katabatic wind (which is simply cold air gravitating down hill) off the Chilterns is unable to escape since the embankment was built, and in consequence the valley enjoyed 198 night frosts in 1935 compared to a mere 88 at Rothamsted, 14 miles away. " Good drainage for katabatic winds " must be stipulated in future for desirable residences in sheltered valleys facing the Downs.

Both books are handsomely illustrated with cloud photos, but it requires " an experienced observer " again to interpret them.

RALPH PARTRIDGE

SIR AUSTEN

Life and Letters of Sir Austen Chamberlain. Vol. II. 1914–1937. By SIR CHARLES PETRIE. *Cassell.* 16*s.*

The second volume of this official biography has far more interesting material than the first; but it is not likely to add to the reputation of its subject. It reveals Sir Austen as a high-minded man, profoundly loyal, rather dull, and with little imaginative insight into the deeper problems of his time. He held many of the greatest offices of the State, save that of Premier, which he twice missed; and Sir Charles here reveals that he refused the Viceroyalty of India and the Embassies of Washington and Paris. Yet there is nothing in the book to suggest that he was ever more than a second-rate man of high character, deeply devoted to his party and to his duty, but hardly different, except in the curious luck of the political game, from a hundred other members of the House at any given time.

His judgments of men do not go very deep. He has a whole-hearted and naïve admiration for Signor Mussolini and Primo de Rivera. He regrets that Mr. Henderson, rather than Mr. Thomas, should have become Foreign Secretary in 1929; he regards the former as an intriguer against Mr. MacDonald; only those who know the price Mr. Henderson paid for a loyalty to Mr. MacDonald which was never returned can estimate the ignorance of that amazing misjudgment. There is a curious petulance about him; that emerges in the exchange of letters with Mr. Churchill over the passage of the Home Rule Act of 1914, and in his attitude to Mr. Baldwin in 1922–3. He hardly understood the great social questions of his time, though the fall of his majority in Birmingham awoke him to the significance of the slums. Under the effective tutelage of Lord D'Abernon he did an important piece of diplomatic work in the Locarno treaties, though he seems to have regarded what ought to have been a beginning, as an end, of a process of reconstruction. He was hard-working, honest, and devoted. He was capable of great personal sacrifices, as when he refused office to give the younger men their chance, in 1931; and there is a fine generosity in his affectionate contemplation of Mr. Neville Chamberlain's rise to power.

Sir Charles Petrie has given us many important documents for the political and diplomatic history of the period, and for these our gratitude is real. But his second volume, like his first, suffers from the fact that he does not know profoundly enough the meaning of the period he has to analyse. His own prejudices are so strong that they may well be regarded as correcting themselves. But his account of Mr. Henderson's dismissal of Lord Lloyd hardly does justice to the published facts; and he has little perception of Sir Austen's limitations. Few people outside the circle of his intimate friends would call Sir Austen " a great parliamentarian "; and the comparison suggested with the younger Pitt implies that Sir Charles Petrie has let his heart run away with his head. Sir Austen had the good fortune to live his life at the centre of great events; but nothing in these pages suggests that he was able in any profound way to influence their direction.

H. J. LASKI

TOWARDS A REGIONAL ARCHITECTURE

An Organic Architecture. By FRANK LLOYD WRIGHT. *Lund Humphries.* 7*s.* 6*d.*

Eric Mendelsohn. By ARNOLD WHITTICK. *Faber and Faber.* 25*s.*

Style in Architecture. By JULIAN LEATHART. *Nelson.* 2*s.* 6*d.*

The re-emergence of national differences after a period of completely international culture is by no means a new phenomenon in architecture. It happened in the fifteenth century when the Gothic architecture which had developed internationally throughout Europe evolved in these islands into the exclusively English Perpendicular and Tudor styles. It happened again in the seventeenth century when Sir Roger Pratt, Sir Christopher Wren and others managed, with the aid of some Dutch alchemy, to convert the new Italian style which had been imported ready-made into something entirely English; something that was to become so firmly rooted, as though in its native soil, that even the pedantry of Lord Burlington and his Palladian protégés was not able to re-enslave Georgian architecture to Italian models.

And to-day we see a similar process beginning. It is not an accident that the modern architecture which grew up in Europe after 1918 was first labelled the International Style—a title that is now patently out of date. For the movement of which it formed a part was Europe-wide. Taking its cue from the new means of construction which the times had produced, and taking its iconoclastic character from the need to re-establish a functional basis for architecture in place of the confused eclecticism of the late nineteenth century, it yet remained, as a movement, primarily an aesthetic one, allied with cubism and other expressions of the contemporary process of artistic revaluation, all of which were international rather than local in character. The various national idioms had been captured by the academies as food for their jackdaw activities, and the modern architects prided themselves instead that their buildings looked the same whether in Paris, Bucharest, Hamburg or Algiers.

This was a necessary discipline, but no art—least of all one that is so bound up with mundane activities as architecture—can flourish on so remote a plane. With the appearance of modern buildings becoming less unfamiliar, and helped by the educational influence of such things as McKnight Kauffer posters and streamlined aeroplanes, a public visually trained to appreciate

an abstract aesthetic has been growing, but the self-conscious relationship between an abstract modern style and even the most informed public is still too far removed from the natural relationship between architecture and its public that arises when the two evolve interdependently, as in previous ages. So while the iconoclastic tasks of modern architecture are still not finished, a process of re-establishing contact with its public—similar to the reintroduction of subject-matter into painting—is inevitable; indeed is already apparent. And one form it takes is this redifferentiation of national characteristics.

One cannot, however, insist too strongly that this process does not represent a retreat from the principles that the modern architectural movement has always stood for; rather is it a measure of their success, for we owe to modern architecture the fact that architects will henceforth be able to look with covetous eyes at those native traditions that are embodied in local materials and craftsmanship, without merely descending to pastiche. National traditions are no longer in bondage to eclecticism.

Perhaps we should be careful to speak of *regional* characteristics rather than national, so as to keep clear the distinction between this process and the pursuit of nationalism that we find—among other places—in contemporary German architecture. The latter is, of course, an instance of the whole process being reversed. Based on an ideological, not an architectural, ideal it rejects the revulsion from eclecticism and seeks a stylistic totalitarianism which is culturally a return to the age of Bismarck. Nevertheless, although national boundaries are not as such the concern of architecture, regional differentiation coincides in many cases with national, simply because culturally we are still largely organised in nations. Modern communications may have broken down many boundaries, including those of art, but there still remains the quality of Englishness as typical of things English and Frenchness of things French, which modern architecture must reflect as clearly as it must reflect the regional differences deriving from climate and materials.

These qualities are difficult ones to exemplify, as the mature modern architecture in which they are to be found is only now appearing over the horizon. Indeed, the present cessation of all building has produced an unnatural pause, during which it is only possible to speak about an entirely speculative future. Nothing, however, could be more mistaken than to regard this pause as marking the end of the movement that we now know as modern architecture. Its rational principles are securely established and have already had an ineradicable influence on all contemporary architecture; and its social influence is largely still to be felt. Its aesthetic philosophy cannot develop otherwise than by expansion along the lines I am trying to indicate. For what is the alternative, since the clock cannot simply be put back? The alternative is the new eclecticism of contemporary Germany.

Failing an active present and looking for guidance to the immediate past, we can probably best exemplify the resurgence of national character in the Scandinavian countries; in the work of architects like Aalto in Finland and Markelius in Sweden, who have had the benefit of a persistent tradition of craftsmanship in native materials. But symptoms of the same process, if not of such mature achievement, can also be seen elsewhere. The text, now reprinted in book form, of the Sulgrave Manor lectures which Frank Lloyd Wright gave in England last summer, and Mr. Whittick's monograph on Eric Mendelsohn, both throw interesting light on this process. Indeed in the case of Lloyd Wright, as his general title implies, his whole philosophy has always been just this insistence on the indigenous nature of good architecture. He disapproves strongly of the academic tradition and believes a conscious aesthetic to be destructive to the healthy growth of architecture.

His writings are rather difficult to digest, being flavoured with his personal mysticism and with the bitterness he cannot help feeling about the deafness of his own countrymen to his exhortations; but his buildings, of which a selection are illustrated in this book, sufficiently demonstrate his genius for using natural materials both spontaneously and imaginatively in a way that makes the more doctrinaire products of modern architecture look very arid indeed. His own works seem to justify his suspicion of an intellectual aesthetic, but then he is a genius, and a genius is a law unto himself. He pretends to wash his hands of the architectural world that he finds when he emerges from his hermitage at Taliesin, but if he only knew it he is still the pioneer in whose footsteps modern architects are following, even though they may choose to work out their salvation in their own more self-conscious terms rather than declare allegiance to his puckish philosophy.

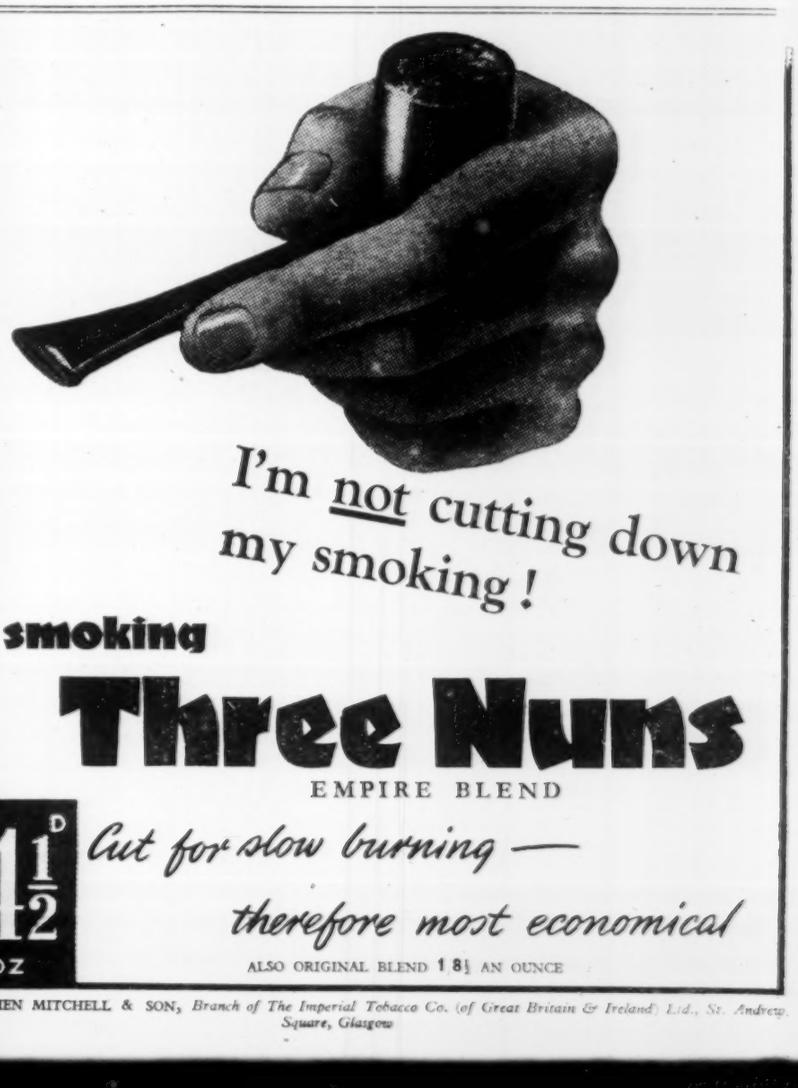
So great a man will not take it amiss if one also observes that some of his later buildings point a warning as well as blazing a new trail. They illustrate the fact that if the modern abstract idiom tends to end in geometrical sterility, what he calls an organic architecture tends equally to decline into an art-and-crafty preciosity quite as remote as the other from the diverse world of human beings for which architects have to provide a setting.

In the case of Mendelsohn we can follow, in Mr. Whittick's chronological account of his career, first his efforts to mould the new idiom into a vehicle of personal expressiveness (as in the notorious Einstein Tower), next his contribution to the more impersonal idiom of the International Style, and finally his success, in his recent work in Palestine, in assimilating the qualities inherent in the local climate and technique into a mature style that is regional in the best traditional sense and yet possesses all the flexibility of plan and structural enterprise that one expects from modern architecture. Mendelsohn is an architect who has always managed to stand stimultaneously for what is best and worst in modern architecture. In his European work his rather showy use of such contrivances as the circular glass-enclosed staircase, while displaying great plastic imagination, contained also the germ of the modernistic; but in his Palestine work this over-expressiveness has gone, perhaps because the intense sunlight demands no adventitious drama. He has even had the courage, in his Medical Centre on Mount Scopus, to reintroduce the Arabic saucer dome, and has done so without any effect of mere pastiche. Here is triumphant proof of the adaptability of modern architecture: a genuinely regional style which is both modern in feeling and monumental in effect.

Mr. Leathart has not got so far. He presents an able analysis of the structural origins of past styles, but his approach to contemporary architecture is unashamedly eclectic. He discovers a new style to be set beside the "modern"—the "modern romantic," and he believes that, "for a house of modern character to be built with bricks (as distinct from concrete) . . . would not be a true expression of modernist principles." But such a doctrine only points back into the unprofitable channels that Lloyd Wright is justifiably proud to have always avoided and from which Mendelsohn has now escaped, setting an example to other modern architects in doing so. J. M. RICHARDS.

Christian Discourses. By SOREN KIERKEGAARD. Translated and with an Introduction by WALTER LOWRIE. *Oxford.* 21s.

It is fitting that in this day of wrath, these words of Soren Kierkegaard should be put together in a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book. For he spake them in a day of wrath. The year 1848 is memorable for the articulation of revolution; it is memorable also for the arrival of the counter-revolution, not that of *émigrés*, but that of those who realised that in the words of de Maistre "a counter-revolution must not be a contrary revolution but the contrary of a revolution." Kierkegaard's father had cursed God from a Jutland dune; Kierkegaard's words are born of his father's act. He brings it to the divine salvation. Not for him to follow in the way of liberalism. Not for him to be proud of that Benthamite institution of public utility, "the right to doubt." "Before God man is always in the wrong," he wrote. Nevertheless, liberalism achieved its secular triumph and the Church has not yet absorbed Kierkegaard and his few fellows. The laity can hardly care to study his *Existenz Philosophie* or the *Dialectic of Ethico-Religious Communication*. But in these pages the laity may rather more easily read Kierkegaard's passionate and compassionate preaching of the Gospel. "Sin is man's ruin." But there is joy in Heaven. "We suffer only once, but triumph eternally." If the reader stumble now and again he should read the enlightening extracts from his journal. And Dr. Lowrie's notes, especially those on page 187, are effective.

The World As I See It. By ALBERT EINSTEIN. *Watts.* 1s. 3d.

It was an admirable idea of the publishers to reprint Dr. Einstein's general writings as a volume in their Thinker's Library. As originally published, the book contained a number of essays on relativity and cognate subjects; these are wisely omitted from this collection. Here there are his general essays, letters and addresses on such topics as war and peace, Germany, the Jewish question, and the place of science in a civilised community. Some of them, like the letter to Professor Freud, will be well known already, but they are all worth reading. In dignified, straightforward, masculine prose, Dr. Einstein reminds us of the values which are now in dispute; through everything he writes—the longer essays and the shorter pieces which are little more than *pensées*—there speaks the spirit of a great European, rational, tolerant, humane, but never weak.

Week-end Competitions

No. 539

Set by L. V. Upward

The discussion between Alice and the Red Queen about the dog, the bone and the lost temper is left in an unsatisfactory state. The Queen has no retort for Alice's mild objection that dog and temper might go different ways. This omission should be made good. The usual prizes are offered for a conversation in which the Red Queen (helped or hindered by a few suggestions from the White Queen, if desired), demolishing all Alice's arguments, proves to the hilt that "the dog's temper would remain." The debate is limited to 250 words.

RULES—

1. Envelopes should be marked with the number of the Problem, in the top left-hand corner, and should be addressed to COMPETITIONS, 10 Great Turnstile, High Holborn, W.C.1. Solutions must reach the Editor by first post on Friday, June 14th.

2. Competitors may use a pseudonym. Typescript is not insisted on, but writing must be on one side of the paper only.

3. The Editor's decision is final. He reserves the right to print in part or as a whole any matter sent in, whether it be awarded a prize or not. MSS. cannot be returned. When no entries reach the required standard no prize will be awarded.

4. No competitor is eligible for more than one prize in any one week.

The result of last week's competition will be announced in our next issue.

RESULT OF COMPETITION No. 537

Set by G. W. Stonier

We offer the usual prizes for the best anecdote which breaks off at a crucial point. Competitors are restricted to 250 words.

Report by G. W. Stonier

Competitors found that it was not at all difficult to begin an anecdote with some stir or amusement and then leave off. The guest in the haunted bedroom would be reading a novel before settling off, when a faint scratching at the lamp switch would make him look up—no, he must have been mistaken—but the light goes out, and then——. Some degree of tension, some mysteriousness are fairly easy to achieve. But bafflement in itself is not enough; and too many entries were unrewarding. Several competitors must have felt this, for they lamely appended a conclusion or solution in brackets. Others protested that their stories were true; this didn't help much either. The first essential of a stop-short story is that for a few moments after the last word the meaning should carry on. I liked—in intention at any rate—"Senator's" tale of a poor clerk. The young man had fallen in love with a model in a shop window and every evening on the way home he would halt before this peerless creature, exquisitely dressed, who gazed into the distance a foot over his head. Spring meant for him the Spring fashions, an unalterable half-smile of triumph on the tilted face. But one day, starting home earlier than usual, he found her no longer alone. Two pink-faced men with black coats and stripe trousers were busy behind the glass of the window. One held a new dress and gave an instruction; the other had already approached the beloved figure and was laying fingers on her shoulder-strap. . . .

Unfortunately this sort of story has to be perfectly told; so well that, having digested it, we can re-read with enhanced pleasure. Neither "Senator" nor I, alas, attain to that.

For the rest, more than one big game hunter levelled his gun only to hear an empty click; under beds and in carriage racks the hand of the middle-aged spinster encountered—what, we are not told.

The balance between being forced and being flat, between revealing too much and too little, was best achieved by Miss Brenda Pool and Mr. Allan M. Laing, to whom prizes go.

FIRST PRIZE

Anderson and I were up a tree. He was an anthropologist I had met in Khartoum, and he had persuaded me to come down into the jungle with him, telling me tales of the beautiful Swaki women. He told me how they turned away their male children when they were ten years old and lived without men, and how once a year at their mating time the young women came into a clearing to dance all day, and at night they sang until the males from the neighbouring tribes came to them, and how after their lovemaking they strangled the men.

There were a dozen of these creatures dancing as the sun went down. They were over seven foot tall, and very slender, with long thighs. The leader wore only a necklace of nuts stained red. I was watching it slapping between her breasts like water breaking against a pier, when she lifted up her neck, lovely as a giraffe's, and looked me straight in the eyes.

BRENDA POOL

SECOND PRIZE

SIR GREGORY PARSLOE AND THE PRAWNS

(Being a Fragment from the Hon. Galahad Threepwood's Unpublished Memoirs, rescued from the Flames.)

Those who have seen how dignified my old friend, Sir Gregory Parsloe, can look on the political platform nowadays, can have no idea of how bonhomous a bean he was in the gay nineties. I know no one who sowed a fruitier wild oat. In those days Fish-Face (as we called him) had a rather low passion for prawns, preferring, if I remember rightly, P. serratus to P. squilla, the former being a crustacean with more body. One evening he and I were passing, like the syncopation birds, swiftly from bar to bar, when Fish-Face suddenly announced that he was hungry and demanded prawns.

"Sorry, sir," said the barman. "No prawns."

"No prawns?" said Fish-Face.

"No, sir. No prawns."

"Not even Palaemon squilla?"

"No, sir. Not even Palaemon squilla."

At this point a Rum Hot leaned over and mentioned casually that the Regent's Park aquarium had a few specimens of P. heterochirus, two feet long.

"Two feet long?" said Fish-Face. The Rum Hot nodded.

"Liar!" said Fish-Face. Whereupon the Rum Hot whispered in Fish-Face's ear.

"I'll do it!" said Fish-Face, and . . .

(Here the MS. fragment ends).

ALLAN M. LAING

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THE WEEK IN THE CITY

By CYNICUS

THE SLUMP IN EQUITIES—RAILWAY YIELDS—THE BOMB RISK AND THE INVESTOR

THE severe slump in ordinary shares on the Stock Exchange should engage the attention of our Treasury controllers. It is all very well to hold the gilt-edged market firmly on the basis of 3½ per cent. for the long-term and 3 per cent. for the medium-term rate of interest but it is disturbing to see the yields on ordinary shares of first-class investment status rising up and up regardless of the rate of interest. Ordinarily the margin between the riskless interest rate and the yield from a stable equity share with a safe dividend is 1½ per cent., which is a sort of premium demanded for the trade risk. To-day, after the recent slump in prices, this margin has widened to as much as 4 per cent. or more in some cases. The following table of representative dividend yields reveals some astonishing results :

Security	Present divd. %	Last earnings %	Price May 3rd	Present Price	Gross Yield %
Imperial Chemical £1	8.0	11.7	31/9	26/3	*£6 5 3
Imperial Tobacco £1	23 (net)	24.9 (net)	5½	4⅛	†£7 19 0
Stewarts & Lloyds £1	12.5	26.1	45/6	33/9	£7 8 0
Vickers Ltd. 10/- ...	10.0	20.2	17/7½	12/9	£7 17 0
Woolworth 5/- ...	65	89.2	59/-	49/3	£6 12 0

* Allowing for Dominion Income Tax relief.
† On 34½ per cent. gross which may not be maintained.

It is difficult to say how much of this extraordinary fall in share prices—25 per cent. in a month in some cases—is attributable to the disturbing war news and how much to the dividend and excess profits muddle left over from Lord Simon. Happily the new Chancellor has abandoned the Dividend Limitation Bill now that he has imposed a general levy of 100 per cent. on all excess profits, but unhappily the excess profits muddle remains. Until this legislation is revised on rational lines so that the Excess Profits Tax falls less hardly on developing or recovering companies and more hardly on the prosperous stable companies which are still virtually escaping their proper contribution to our war finance, there will remain great uncertainty in regard to company dividends.

* * *

The market did respond temporarily to the news of the abandonment of the Statute of (Dividend) Limitations, but the fact that it fell again almost immediately on the news of the fresh German offensive suggests that the equity shareholder is more disturbed by the fear of bombs falling on his factories and plant than by the financial muddles of the Treasury. If business premises are to be bombed systematically no doubt the railways will be singled out. This may explain the fantastic and, for the bulls, catastrophic fall in the home railway junior market :

	Price May 3rd.	Present Price	Divd.*	Divd. Yield %
L.M.S. 1st Pref. ...	65	46½	4%	£8 16 0
L.M.S. 1923 Pref. ...	54	29½	4%	£13 12 0
L.M.S. Ordinary ...	21½	12	1%	£8 6 9
L.N.E.R. 1st Pref. ...	52	27	4%	£14 16 3
L.N.E.R. 2nd Pref.	19½	9	1.2%	£13 6 9
Southern Pref. Ord.	71½	42	5%	£11 18 0
Southern Def. Ord.	20½	9	0.8%	£8 17 9
Gt. Western Ord. ...	45½	30	3.3%	£11 0 0

* Guaranteed under the Government war agreement.

It will be seen that the average percentage fall in home railway values since May 3rd has been 44 per cent. This is extraordinary in view of the fact that the dividends set out in this table are those covered by the minimum revenue of £40 millions a year guaranteed by the Government under the railway agreement. Is not the market over-estimating and over-discounting the bomb risk when it widens the margin of yield over the gilt-edged market to 4 per cent. or even 10 per cent. ?

We know that the Government has undertaken to provide compensation for war damage at the end of the war. In the case of the railways there is a clause in the recent Government agreement which provides that " the cost of restoring war damage up to a maximum of £10,000,000 in any full year (and *pro rata* for part of a year) is to be charged to revenue." This is very lenient, but the market must be considering not so much the capital cost of war damage as the loss of earnings or even entire stoppage of trading in the event of an invasion of this country from the air. But why has the market been so extremely undiscriminating ? It is possible that certain works situated on the coast or near a military objective, such as an aerodrome, may be entirely smashed to pieces, but it is difficult to see how companies whose assets are so well distributed as Woolworths or Imperial Tobacco can be greatly affected by a German air offensive. Again, the plants of Imperial Chemical and Vickers may become the military objectives of the German bombers, but if this is so, why does not the market demand a higher return from these shares than from the shares of industrial companies situated, say, in South Wales ? At the moment the market seems to be blindly nervous and unconstructive. If the investor feels anxious about the risk of bombs he should buy the shares of the Rhodesian Copper companies—Rhokana, say, at 7⅞ to yield £7 18*s* per cent. on dividends of 50 per cent.—or a well-spread tin investment trust such as British Tin at 12*s*. 6*d*. to yield 9¾ per cent. on estimated dividends of 12 per cent, but it is absurd for him to sell equity shares generally without discrimination as he must have been doing in the past month. Institutional investors who have the funds to buy sound equities at bargain prices should set a lead and stop the rot.

AMUSEMENTS

THEATRES

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PERSONAL—continued

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